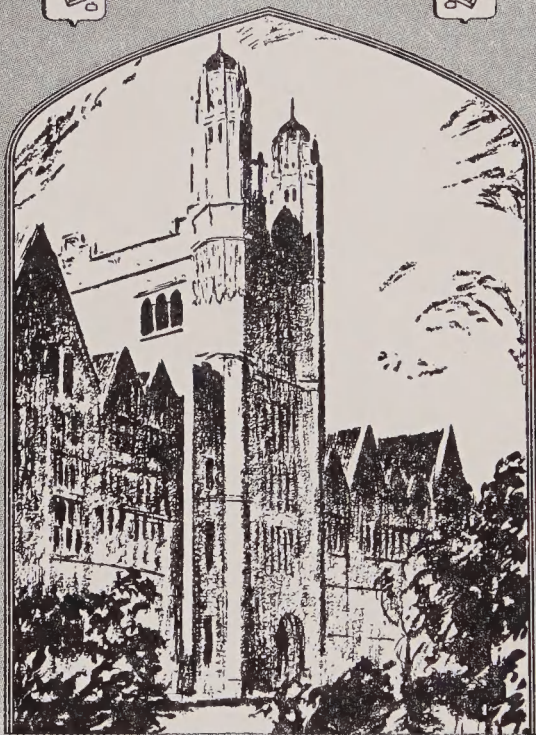


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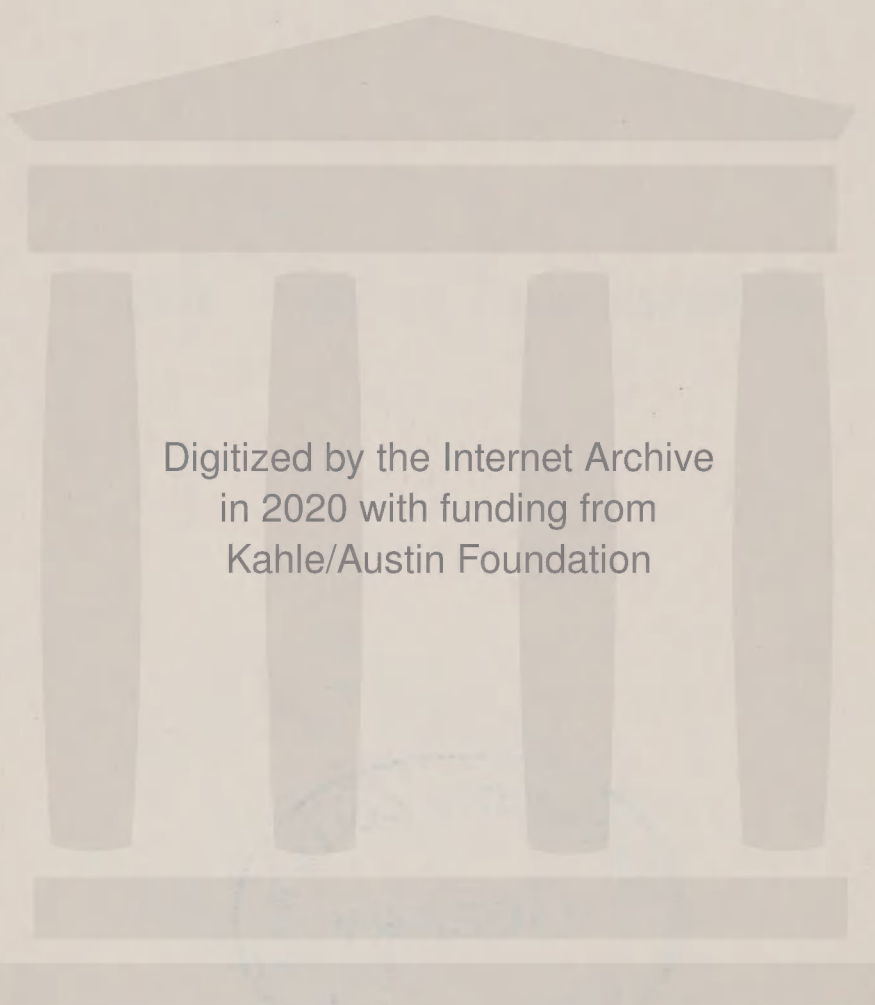
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Historical Records and Studies

Volume XLV

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CATHOLIC HISTORICAL RECORDS AND STUDIES

THE ANNUAL MEETING, 1956

THE United States Catholic Historical Society held its seventy-first annual meeting on Tuesday, November 20, 1956, at Marymount College, 221 East 71st Street, New York City. At the business session, which was opened by the vice-president, the Reverend Vincent C. Hopkins, at 8:15 p.m., the nominating committee recommended the election of the following slate of officers: honorary president, His Eminence Francis Cardinal Spellman; president, the Reverend Vincent C. Hopkins; vice-president, George B. Fargis; treasurer, Charles H. Ridder; secretary, F. Sadlier Dinger; and editor of publications, the Reverend James A. Reynolds. The committee also nominated, as directors for a term of three years: the Reverend Francis X. Curran, Fred H. Paulmann, Richard Reid, and the Reverend George E. Tiffany. The Reverend Henry J. Browne was also proposed as a director, to serve the unexpired term of F. Sadlier Dinger. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the secretary was directed to cast one ballot for the election of the above candidates.

The retiring treasurer of the society, Richard Reid, rose to pay tribute to Miss Elizabeth P. Herbermann, who had announced her intention to relinquish the post of executive secretary after many years of service in that office. Mr. Reid's remarks appear elsewhere in this volume.

The chairman then presented the Most Reverend Philip J. Furlong, a director of the society, who presided for the remainder of the session as the representative of the honorary president, His Eminence Cardinal Spellman.

The speaker of the evening was Professor Annabelle McConnell Melville, professor of history and head of the department of social studies at the Bridgewater, Massachusetts, Teachers College and a visiting lecturer at the Catholic University Summer School. Mrs. Melville's paper, "Some Aspects of the Return of Bishop Cheverus to France," is printed elsewhere in this volume. At the conclusion of her address, Bishop Furlong commended Mrs. Melville for the scholarship evident in her research and expressed the gratitude of the members of the society.

After conveying the blessing of His Eminence the Cardinal, Bishop Furlong adjourned the meeting.

SOME ASPECTS OF THE RETURN OF BISHOP CHEVERUS TO FRANCE*

BY ANNABELLE M. MELVILLE

ON October 1, 1823, the *Paris*, captained by Henry Robinson, set sail from New York for Le Havre. The passage was a stormy one, ending in shipwreck off the coast of France. But no lives were lost, and both the captain and others on board have left accounts of the voyage telling of the presence among the passengers of two French clergymen who were returning to their homeland. The one, Jean Moranvillé, a former choir director of the Baltimore pro-cathedral, has excited no comment from history. But the presence of the other, the former Bishop of Boston, has proposed the so-called "Cheverus problem." Why, after almost twenty-seven years in New England, and after a decade and a half as Bishop of Boston, was Jean LeFebvre de Cheverus returning to France? The answer to this question will always be the most interesting chapter in any biographical study of the first Bishop of Boston.

Four aspects of the problem merit consideration: the situation in the Diocese of Boston on the eve of his departure, the circumstances in Restoration France which provoked his departure, the Roman aspects of his transfer, and the personal character of the prelate himself. From the point of view of chronology, prime concern lies with the months between January 13, 1823, when the King of France nominated Cheverus to the See of Montauban, and May 3, 1824, when a Roman consistory officially confirmed the nomination.

The Church in Boston on the eve of Cheverus' departure had both its light and dark sides. On the former, the five years preceding the first bishop's translation had seen remarkable progress. Five new churches had been erected: in South Boston, New Bedford, Salem, Maine, and New Hampshire. Plans were

* This paper was read at the annual public meeting of the Society, held at Marymount College, New York City, November 20, 1956. Mrs. Melville is professor of history at State Teachers College, Bridgewater, Massachusetts, and the author of *Elizabeth Bayley Seton* (1951) and *John Carroll of Baltimore* (1955). She is currently preparing a biography of Bishop Cheverus.

under consideration for others in Vermont and Connecticut. Stations or mission chapels were served in Maine at Newburyport and Portland, and in Rhode Island at Bristol, Newport, and Providence. Every state in the New England area had a Catholic nucleus. Diocesan records showed a proportionate increase in baptisms and marriages as well. Excluding Maine, the diocese contained well over 3,500 Catholics. The number of priests had increased from three to five. An Ursuline convent was founded and soon numbered more than half a hundred children in the convent school.¹

Again on the bright side, Catholics who were a minority group in a Puritan society had come to enjoy much pleasanter relations with their neighbors. The oath of office in 1820 had dropped the words "foreign prelate or spiritual jurisdiction," and in the election of delegates to the state constitutional convention in 1820 Cheverus himself had received 410 votes. Although he was not elected, his vote was indeed "a handsome compliment." On the occasion of the consecration of a new Catholic cemetery one Boston newspaper commented: "The benefits which society has derived from this Church ever since its establishment, make every good citizen rejoice at its increase and prosperity."² The most interesting testimony of goodwill is without question the memorial drawn up by prominent non-Catholics protesting the departure of Cheverus in 1823. The list of 226 signers contained some of the most outstanding names in Massachusetts and the protest, which was addressed to France, said plainly, "It is impossible for us to make known to you by any words how entire, grateful and beneficent is the dominion of Bishop Cheverus over all to whom he ministers in his Apostolic Authority. We hold him to be a blessing and a treasure in our social community which we cannot part with and which, without injustice to any man we may affirm, if withdrawn from us can never be replaced."³

There was another side, however, and one which might very

¹ This summary is based on Robert Lord, John Sexton, and Edward Harrington, *History of the Archdiocese of Boston* (New York, 1944), I, 715-717.

² *Columbian Sentinel*, December 23, 1818.

³ Archives Nationales, cited in Lord *et al.*, *Archdiocese of Boston*, I, 800-801.

well have oppressed a member of the hierarchy of the United States. Quite apart from the persistent poverty of the diocese, a poverty which only influenced the bishop in as much as it affected his priests, there was a growing dissension among the members of the American episcopacy, and more than a suspicion that Rome favored non-French bishops. William Taylor, who was to be Cheverus' own choice for his successor in Boston, wrote in 1820 that the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide believed "that the French and German missionaries are detested in America; that French Bishops are tyrannical in the exercise of their jurisdictions."⁴ Joseph A. Plessis, the Bishop of Quebec, was disturbed enough to write to Cardinal Fontana, Prefect of Propaganda, on September 6, 1820, "I believe it is my duty to reiterate to your Eminence that the Catholics in the U. S. have, in general, much respect and affection for their French bishops, and if there are complaints against them they are made by Irish monks, ambitious vagabonds, who to the misfortune of these dioceses, would occupy the first places."⁵ When Cheverus was suggested to Propaganda as apostolic visitor to New York in 1821, Rome rejected the proposal with the notation, "It should be neither Boston nor any other French Bishop since they are of a spirit of partiality from a national point of view."⁶ Although Cheverus probably did not know of this particular opposition to himself as a visitor to New York he certainly believed in the existence of anti-French feeling. It shows in the correspondence of his last years in Boston. When three new bishops were named to the United States, all of them Irish, Cheverus commented to Archbishop Maréchal, "I fear they arrive with prejudices against us."⁷ And when Maréchal invited Cheverus to attend the dedication of the Baltimore cathedral, the latter answered, "I would like to . . . but if the other Bishops are not coming, or are not invited, would they imagine (as they have already pretended) that there is a Gallican conspiracy?"⁸ Again, when Maréchal asked

⁴ Archives of the Archdiocese of Boston (hereafter AABo), Taylor to Cheverus, July 8, 1820.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Plessis to Fontana, September 6, 1820.

⁶ *Ibid.*, copy of Arch. Prop. Fide, Atti, 1821, p. 8.

⁷ Archives of the Archdiocese of Baltimore (hereafter AAB), 14-K-39, Cheverus to Maréchal, November 29, 1820.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 14-K-45, Cheverus to Maréchal, May 3, 1821.

Cheverus to go to Rome to present American conditions there the Bishop of Boston demurred saying, "What good would I be able to accomplish? I am French; they would not trust me."⁹

It does not seem wise, nevertheless, to over-emphasize this nationalistic factor in determining Cheverus' departure since, in the first place, there were still four French bishops in the United States, and, in the second, Cheverus was a man whose sensitivity did not color his decisions. At the time that Charleston was first proposed as an episcopal see Cheverus had recommended Benedict Fenwick; and when DeBarth refused Philadelphia, Cheverus suggested either Gallitzin or Hurley, neither one a Frenchman. Further, there is no hint in any of the Cheverus papers that opposition to French bishops in the United States had any connection whatever with his decision to go.

Another facet of the American hierarchy may have swayed his decision more; this was a decline in effectiveness. Cheverus felt that episcopacy was being weakened by the creation of too many dioceses, that the new bishops were apt to be unacquainted with the American scene, and most of all, that the authority and dignity of the Archbishop of Baltimore, Ambrose Maréchal, was being impugned both at home and in Rome. He wrote to Montreal in 1821, "They are making more bishops than there are needed."¹⁰ To Quebec he commented, on Norfolk, "The last see was erected, as you know, in spite of our worthy archbishop."¹¹ And with Maréchal himself Cheverus commiserated, "It is afflicting that they divide your diocese without consulting you. . . . All that is needed is a Diocese of Washington!"¹² The difficulties in Charleston, New York, and schism in Philadelphia led Cheverus to exclaim, "Poor Church in the U. S. It would make you shed tears of blood."¹³ Upon learning that Maréchal had decided to go to Rome Cheverus told him, "I bless God for inspiring your resolution. . . . Return invested with the powers which will

⁹ *Ibid.*, 14-K-49, Cheverus to Maréchal, September 26, 1821.

¹⁰ Bibliothèque St. Sulpice, Montreal, Boston copy, Cheverus to LeSaulnier, March 9, 1821.

¹¹ Archives of the Archdiocese of Quebec, Boston copy, Cheverus to Plessis, January 2, 1821.

¹² AAB, 14-K-38, Cheverus to Maréchal, September 26, 1820.

¹³ Bibliothèque St. Sulpice, Montreal, Boston copy, Cheverus to LeSaulnier, February 20, 1821.

put an end to the confusion of our poor church in the United States."¹⁴

Yet, here again, although the bishop's feelings are clear, it is by no means so certain that they influenced his action. His letters to Baltimore show that as troubles multiplied his assurances of respect and obedience grew more emphatic. If troubles ever arose in Boston, he told his archbishop, "Instead of disputing the limits of your jurisdiction I would throw myself on my knees and beg you to interject your authority to which I would submit with all my soul."¹⁵ He certainly acted in this spirit when he first heard of his nomination to Montauban. He wrote at once to Baltimore, "I desire that Rome refuse to translate me to Montauban. Give me the help of your prayers and advice."¹⁶ And when Maréchal replied with strong reasons why Cheverus should stay in Boston the latter immediately said, "Here I stay. Send me a letter I can forward to France with my reply and which will strengthen it."¹⁷ The next week he sent his refusal to France.

It would seem, then, that in the early summer of 1823 conditions in Boston and the American Church in general did not impel Cheverus to go but, on the contrary, confirmed his determination to stay and support his colleagues in the hierarchy.

In an essay on religious life in Restoration France Professor de Bertier remarks: "The Revolution had claimed to dechristianize France, and had bordered upon anarchy; the Empire had claimed to put religion at the service of the State, and had degenerated in tyranny; the very Christian King, on the contrary, owed it to himself to place the State at the service of the Church."¹⁸ For the restoration of the Bourbons and of the Church went hand in hand. As Chateaubriand summed it up, "The throne of St. Louis without the religion of St. Louis is an absurd proposition." Certainly Louis XVIII quickly affirmed this policy on his return from England in 1814. The Constitutional Charter of 1814 declared Catholicism the state religion; the Or-

¹⁴ AAB, 14-K-41, Cheverus to Maréchal, January 30, 1821.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 14-J-32, Cheverus to Maréchal, December 10, 1819.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 14-L-53, Cheverus to Maréchal, March 26, 1823.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 14-L-56, Cheverus to Maréchal, April 21, 1823.

¹⁸ G. de Bertier de Sauvigny, *La Restauration* (Paris, 1955), p. 408.

dinance of June 10 facilitated gifts of ecclesiastical establishments; another of October 5 allowed bishops to open schools in each department exempt from University control.

But the reconstitution of a hierarchy and a clergy was another problem. A report on the state of bishops and archbishops of France compiled August 1, 1823, listed fifteen episcopal or metropolitan sees vacant in 1816 with a total number of clerical vacancies at 16,125 as compared to 35,979 occupied. In the year Cheverus left Boston, in addition to Montauban, bishops were needed at Belley, Carcassonne, Quimper, and Tulle; while both Lyon and Besançon were without archbishops.¹⁹ Of the three French cardinals who signed the address of the French hierarchy to Pope Pius VII in 1819 only Louis François de Bausset was still living in 1823, Talleyrand and la Luzerne having died in 1821.²⁰ The lower clergy had to be replenished as well. When Louis XVIII returned to his throne there were scarcely half as many priests as in 1789; 3,345 auxiliary chapels had no regular service. Of the priests who were available only four percent were under forty years of age. To quote Chateaubriand again, "If things continue to go as they are, twenty years from now there will only be enough priests in France to attest that once there were altars."²¹ From the point of view of the king, the nomination of Cheverus was certainly reasonable.

What was the situation in Montauban prior to 1823 that prompted his being named to that particular see? When Napoleon and his empress Josephine had visited that city in July 1808, the Catholics had received the imperial couple with double joy since the French ruler was generally believed responsible for the re-erection of the See of Montauban earlier that year. Certainly his official approval was attested by his decree of November 21, ordering the organization of the Department of Tarn-et-Garonne, and the episcopal See of Montauban to take effect January 1, 1809. The new diocese was formed from segments of Toulouse, Cahors, and Agen and comprised under the Cathedral of the Assumption twenty-three cantons, 270 parishes, and

¹⁹ Archives Nationales, F19-268, pp. 72; 86-87.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, F19-1929, Address of the French Hierarchy, May 30, 1819.

²¹ Cited in de Bertier, *Restoration*, pp. 416-417.

sixty-eight succursales. But nine years passed without any real change. It was not until the restoration of Louis XVIII that hopes for a bishop seemed near realization. Meanwhile, with the consent of the three bishops from whose jurisdiction Montauban had been created,²² the administration of the diocese had been left to a vicar-general, Jean Armand Chaudru de Trélissac.

A concordat negotiated between France and the Holy See in 1817 had confirmed all the dioceses created by Napoleon's Concordat of 1801 and the papal bull of July 26, 1817, re-erected Montauban as a suffragan see of Metropolitan Toulouse under the title: *Montis-Albani Sub Invocatione Mariae Virginis*. Louis XVIII had hoped that Abbé Nicholas Mac-Carthy, an old classmate of Cheverus, would become the first Bishop of Montauban after the Restoration; but Mac-Carthy had refused and the king had then named Jean-Brumauld de Beauregard.²³ But the Concordat of 1817 was not executed for reasons which will be given later, and by the time the Franco-Roman rift had been healed in 1822 the See of Orléans was vacant because of the death of Pierre-Marin Routh de Varicourt. Beauregard, the bishop-elect of Montauban, was named to Orléans; and the same royal ordinance of January 13, 1823, named Cheverus to Montauban.

Although the population of the city itself had not notably increased since the Revolution, the Diocese of Montauban by the end of 1823 had well over 200,000 inhabitants, 11,000 of whom were Protestants. The spirit of reaction after 1815 had caused a lively uneasiness among non-Catholics not only in Bordeaux and

²² For an account of Napoleon's visit see *Journal de Lot*, August 7, 1808. The bull erecting the Diocese of Montauban was issued by Pius VII on February 17, 1808. For Trélissac see Camille Daux, *Histoire de l'église de Montauban* (Paris, 1882), II, Section VIII, 22-29; Section IX, 33-42.

²³ Nicholas Mac-Carthy was the son of an Irish Catholic gentleman who had taken refuge at Toulouse. On March 3, 1808, he had taken an active part in organizing the *Congrégation* of Toulouse. His brilliant talents for religious conferences at Toulouse, his success in the pulpit at Bordeaux, as well as the *éclat* of his family made him a natural choice in 1817. For further references to Mac-Carthy see Michaud, *Biographie Universelle*, XXV, 607; Pierre Genevray, *L'administration et la vie ecclésiastique dans le grand Diocèse de Toulouse pendant les dernières années de l'Empire et sous la Restauration* (Paris, 1941). The *Congrégation* is best discussed by de Bertier. See note 28.

the Gironde but in Montauban and Tarn-et-Garonne as well. In Bordeaux the saintly archbishop, d'Aviau du Bois de Sanzay, had effected much amity among the rival Christians. When George Canning visited that city he was so impressed that on his return to the British Parliament he cited the great port as proof that Restoration France was free from intolerance. That Louis XVIII hoped for as much in Montauban from the saintly Bishop of Boston is suggested in a letter to Cheverus penned on January 24, 1823, by Baron Hyde de Neuville. Writing from Paris the former minister to the United States said, "The King makes an appeal to you which you can not refuse to consider. . . . Catholics and Protestants are there. Who better than you could maintain peace and inspire them with a spirit of concord?"²⁴ When the king himself bade Cheverus farewell in the summer of 1824, as the latter set out for his new see, the Protestants of Montauban were uppermost in his mind. Reporting the occasion to Rome the Paris nuncio commented, "The King said to him that knowing many Protestants to be in his Diocese he should imitate the example of the Good Shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine to seek that which was lost. Thus your Eminence may perceive how great is the heart of His Majesty for the propagation of the Catholic religion and how great his desire to see returned to the fold those of his subjects who still remain away."²⁵

If we accept the need for bishops in general, and the suitability of Cheverus to Montauban in particular, one thing only remains to be examined from the aspect of Restoration France. Precisely how did his nomination come about? There has never been any question that the prime mover in the matter was Baron Hyde de Neuville. The earliest biographer of Cheverus, his contemporary and friend, André J. M. Hamon, wrote:

M. Hyde de Neuville, Ambassador of France in the United States, who had seen with pain the health of the Bishop of Boston wasting away, convinced from opinions of physicians that a more genial climate would establish it, and preserve to religion so worthy a prelate, had, on his return to Paris,

²⁴ AAB, 14-L-54. Cheverus forwarded this letter to Maréchal.

²⁵ Arch. Secret. Vat. Rub. 248, Sec. di Stato, 36242, Boston copy, July 13, 1824.

made known to the King his great worth, inducing this prince to recall him.²⁶

Father Hamon, who was the director of the major seminary at Bordeaux, and who later died as pastor of Saint Sulpice in Paris, was awarded 2,000 francs by the Académie Française for his biography of Cheverus, a high distinction in the 19th century. But he gave no indication of documentation that would substantiate his statement. A century later Robert H. Lord, the brilliant convert-historian who contributed so much to the scholarship of the *History of the Archdiocese of Boston*, collected the documents which not only proved but clarified Hamon's contention.²⁷ With a little further knowledge of Hyde de Neuville's position in Restoration France it is now possible to trace accurately the course of events which led to the nomination of Cheverus.

Jean-Guillaume Hyde de Neuville had an interesting political career, and although historians do not agree on the wisdom of his actions, one thing is clear: he was always a friend of legitimate monarchy. During the Revolution, because of his known opposition to it, he was often on the verge of imprisonment. After the coup d'état of 1799 he had attempted to reorganize a royalist movement.²⁸ At the time of Austerlitz he had been given a choice of going voluntarily to America or being deported, and he remained in exile until 1814. While he was in the United States this first time he made connections that later stood him in good stead. He returned to France in 1814 and volunteered to serve as a royal guard to Louis XVIII. During the 100 days he was exiled briefly again, but this time with the king. On Janu-

²⁶ André J. M. Hamon, *Vie du cardinal de Cheverus* (Paris, 1883), p. 123. The reference in the English translation by E. Stewart published in Boston in 1839 is found on p. 134. The French work cited above was the seventh, and more accurate, edition of the work which was originally published under a pseudonym, J. Huen-Dubourg, which was in reality the name of Hamon's uncle. After Hamon had to resort to law to collect the prize money awarded the biography, he published subsequent editions under his own name.

²⁷ Copies of these documents are in the Boston archives. Lord's treatment of de Neuville's connection with the Cheverus nomination may be found in the *History of the Archdiocese of Boston*, I, 791-797.

²⁸ G. de Bertier de Sauvigny, *Le Comte Ferdinand de Bertier (1782-1864) et l'énigme de la congrégation* (Paris, 1948), p. 31.

ary 14, 1816, he was named minister plenipotentiary to the United States. In April he left for Washington, and except for a few months in France in 1820, he was in this country until July 1822. On his return the king made him *grand officier* in the Legion of Honor.²⁹ Here was a trusted and loyal servant whose opinions would be expected to receive favorable attention.

What were the diplomat's relations with the Bishop of Boston? Here we are on less certain ground. The printed, edited, versions of his *Mémoires* offer no clue. Monsignor Lord called him an "old friend" and suggested a correspondence in which Hyde de Neuville proposed a bishopric in France to Cheverus. But this correspondence is not in evidence. We know only that in a letter to his brother, Cheverus remarked, "I receive your precious packet by M. de Neuville. . . . I wrote to M. de Neuville to thank him for his attention, but, if I return to France I do not wish any other title there than that of former Bishop of Boston."³⁰ Since this letter was written early in 1821 it may indicate that as early as de Neuville's visit to France in 1820 the subject of Cheverus' return was discussed; but the evidence is too slim to lead to any solid conclusions.

What can be determined is best achieved by an examination of the available documents of the year 1823 in chronological order. On January 13 a royal ordinance of Louis by the Grace of God King of France and of Navarre, said, "Upon the presentation of our Great Chaplain we have named and name de Cheverus Bishop of the See of Montauban, replacing Jean Brunauld de Beauregard, named by ordinance this day to the See of Orléans."³¹ The Great Chaplain was Gustave-Maximilien, Prince of Croij, Talleyrand's successor and Archbishop of Rouen who was

²⁹ A. Boullée, "Hyde de Neuville," *Biographie Universelle*, XX (1858), 240-241; de Bertier, *de Bertier*, p. 157.

³⁰ Private Archives de Plinval, Boston copy, March 3, 1821.

³¹ Archives Nationales, F19-669. The ordinance was registered on January 17, 1823. The first names of Cheverus did not appear. The title *Grand Aumônier* is not translated easily. Great Chaplain is used in preference to Grand Almoner as being a little more accurate. The office under the Bourbons of the Restoration was held first by Alexandre Cardinal Talleyrand and then by the Cardinal Prince de Croij. The *Grand Aumônier* was an official in Church affairs just below the King but higher than the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs.

to be a cardinal after March 21, 1825.³² On January 18 he wrote to Cheverus:

M. the Baron Hyde de Neuville, on his return from the U. S., approached me with a very lively interest in your situation. He led me to understand that the climate of the country, little favorable to your health, would perhaps be a motive capable of persuading you to accept a new destination in France.

After this flattering hope I proposed to His Majesty that he name you Bishop of Montauban. . . . Blame me for the reception of this letter and keep me informed as to what you are going to do.³³

On January 24 Hyde de Neuville also wrote to Cheverus. His appeal ended with the words, "Accept, I beg of you. It would be an act of submission to our King, our Church, and the common good."³⁴

When Cheverus, after consulting Maréchal, refused the nomination, the Prince de Croij explained more forcibly that the needs of Boston could not be compared with the situation of religion and the clergy in France. "Without doubt," he argued, "being so far from us, you have no exact idea of this situation, of the enfeeblement of our resources after such long hardships, of the voids which have successively occurred in the clergy—in a word, the penury of candidates suitable to high places." He went on to say that this was a most critical epoch for the Church in France, involving as it did the reestablishment of twenty-four dioceses. It was the will of Providence that Cheverus return to his fatherland.³⁵ This letter in its entirety was the decisive factor in bringing Cheverus to reconsider his first refusal.

The Church in France was in real need of worthy bishops, the population of Montauban suggested the particular suitability of the Bishop of Boston, who had had such notable success in the Protestant New England community, and lastly, the Great Chap-

³² For brief biographies of the Prince de Croij cf. l'Abbé Barbier, *Biographie du Clergé contemporain par un solitaire*, VI (1843), 253-288; Emil Hilaire, *Biographie des Archevêques de France par un ancien donneur d'eau bénite* (Paris, 1826), pp. 22-24.

³³ Archives Nationales, F19-2538, January 18, 1823.

³⁴ See note 24 above.

³⁵ Archives Nationales, F19-2538, July 12, 1823.

lain of the King was the chief promulgator of the translation once de Neuville had brought the name of Cheverus to his attention.

On July 22, 1814, there had arrived in Rome the former Bishop of Saint-Malo, Cortois de Pressigny, the French ambassador to the Holy See. His instructions, prepared by Talleyrand, included a demand that the changes made in France since 1800, particularly the Concordat of 1801, should be annulled. If Pius VII was not sorry to abrogate the unilateral act of Napoleon he did not relish playing the role of guilty repentant. The negotiations were, naturally, proceeding only slowly when the 100 Days interrupted them. By the time they were resumed in 1816 Count de Blacas now represented France, and together with Cardinal Consalvi he reached an agreement which was believed a compromise satisfactory to both France and Rome.³⁶ Briefly, it provided that the Concordat of 1801 should cease to have effect, former episcopal sees should be re-established, and those erected in 1801 should be preserved and subsidized by the State.

The pope was already preparing to issue the necessary bulls when French action destroyed the work of the negotiators. First, the king insisted on inserting a reservation on the liberties of the Gallican Church. Then, after suitable language nuances got around this obstacle, and Pius VII published the bulls establishing additional French dioceses and confirmed in consistory three French cardinals and thirty-four new bishops of the king's choice, new difficulties appeared. The French Chambers rebelled, taking exception to the traditional phrasing "the full and free authority" of the pope as impugning the rights of the king to assign endowments to the new sees. The law presented to the Chambers, as a substitute for the real text of the treaty, made it appear in Rome that the king's government was as high-handed as Napoleon's had ever been. The upshot of the whole affair was that the treaty of July 1817 was not put into effect. The pope declared that provisionally the old Napoleonic division of dioceses would

³⁶ For treatments of these negotiations see Jean Leflon, *La crise révolutionnaire, 1789-1846* (Paris, 1949), pp. 330-332; Bertier, *Restauration*, pp. 409-411. For a brief sketch of Ercole Consalvi, John Tracy Ellis, *Cardinal Consalvi and Anglo-Papal Relations, 1814-1824* (Washington, 1942), pp. 1-3.

prevail, and the thirty-four new bishops should refrain from exercising jurisdiction. Until 1822 this "provisional" state of affairs continued to prevail.³⁷

Montauban had been one of the sees erected by the papal bull of July 26, 1817, and its bishop-elect Beauregard was one of the more than thirty appointed who did not exercise his jurisdiction, but went on as vicar-general of Poitiers.³⁸ By the time the rift between Paris and Rome was healed the vacancy of Orléans led the king to consider Beauregard for that see, leaving Montauban still to be filled.³⁹ Meanwhile, on May 30, 1819, the French hierarchy, both those active and those provisionally inactive, addressed the pope on the feast of Pentecost. This document merits rather lengthy quotation for the picture it presents of the distresses of France. After speaking of their high hopes at the time of the concordat, and the subsequent blasting of these hopes when the bulls for the new bishops did not arrive, the prelates who adhered went on to say:

The state of the Church, far from improving in France, has become, and becomes from day to day more deplorable. Not only have we not felt a lightening of our burden of grief, but it presses more heavily upon us; and the time is not far distant when it will be impossible to raise us from our ruins. Ecclesiastical discipline is relaxed; a great number of dioceses are not sufficiently governed, the faithful err like flocks without shepherds; ecclesiastical establishments languish; the priesthood is not repaired by the small number of students,

³⁷ There is some disagreement among French historians over the precise figures involved in the number of dioceses established by the agreement of 1817. Leflon gives the total number as 89; de Bertier, "42 new dioceses," Daux, 47 new dioceses. If Leflon is correct (pp. 203, 208) in giving the number of bishops and archbishops under the Concordat of 1801 as sixty, and the number (p. 333) in 1817 as eighty-nine then twenty-nine new dioceses were created in the latter year. De Bertier seems closer to this number (p. 414) when he says that in 1822 "the thirty dioceses anticipated were erected." But unless de Bertier is excluding the ten archbishops of Napoleonic times his final total of eighty only raises a further arithmetic question. It seems evident from the letter of Pius VII to the French hierarchy of August 19, 1819, that Rome felt that ninety-two sees (a number derived from rumor of Louis XVIII's intentions) were too many for France to support. The pope stated that the needs of the Church absolutely demanded that this number be diminished.

³⁸ Archives Nationales, F19-1929, September 28, 1819.

³⁹ Beauregard took possession of Orleans on May 7, 1823. Archives Nationales, F19-1758, Cortez to Langlois.

often fettered in their vocation, uneasy in their instruction, or discouraged by the prospect of misery and disgusts which attend the exercise of the Holy Ministry.⁴⁰

The pope's reply on August 19 expressed his ardent desire to remedy the evils existing in France but ended by reaffirming that the bishops were to remain in their sees, and the bishops-elect were to refrain from serving.⁴¹ The hierarchy had no alternative but to beseech the faithful to live united under "this provisional rule of discipline" while hoping for a better future.⁴²

The chief cause for delay in 1819 seems to have been a difference of opinion between Paris and Rome on the question of the number of new sees. Pius VII had heard that Louis XVIII had augmented the episcopal sees to ninety-two; the kingdom could not afford so many. Until the number was reduced the Concordat of 1817 could not be executed.⁴³ It was true that the king had been increasing the number as endowments could be arranged. In the end a compromise was reached: to the former number only thirty new ones were added. On September 30, 1822, the papal bull *Paternae caritatis* officially erected the new sees, of which Montauban was one.⁴⁴

This was the very autumn that Baron Hyde de Neuville was back in France, with his suggestion that the Bishop of Boston might be persuaded to return to his fatherland. The pattern emerges more clearly now, in this converging of events: the papal bull erecting Montauban, the vacancy of Orléans eliciting the nomination of the man formerly destined for Montauban, and the suggestion of the former minister to the United States. However coincidental these events may have been, it is not too much to

⁴⁰ Archives Nationales, F19-1929. Forty members of the French hierarchy signed the original, nine others adhered later, and five refused to sign or advocated reservations.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Pius VII to the French hierarchy, August 19, 1819.

⁴² *Ibid.*, September 13, 1819. In publishing this declaration of the cardinals, archbishops, and bishops the Archbishop of Bordeaux, d'Aviau Dubois de Sansay, indicated that he did so at the request of the Great Chaplain who wished no slightest hint of disunity within France.

⁴³ See note 41 above.

⁴⁴ Daux, *Montauban*, II, Section VIII, 30. Leflon, *Crise*, p. 335, states that the bull appeared October 6, 1822. Until the Separation Act of 1905, which had such disastrous effects on ecclesiastical archives in France, a copy of this bull was preserved in the episcopal archives in Montauban. Today these archives have no materials relating to Cheverus.

say that the healing of the Franco-Roman differences by October 1822 directly influenced the translation of Jean Cheverus from Boston to Montauban.

A second phase of the Roman aspect comes to the fore after the ordinance of January 13, 1823, naming Cheverus to Montauban: the problem posed by the vacancy at Boston.

When Hyde de Neuville urged Cheverus early in 1823 to return to France he wrote, "I am authorized to tell you that the Court of Rome would be disposed to give you at Boston the successor you would designate, the one that you believe best fitted to preserve the vineyard that is so dear to you."⁴⁵ However suspect the authorization may have proved in the light of later events, there is little doubt that the sentence had influence on Cheverus' final decision to accept Montauban. There was, he believed, a worthy successor already at hand. Before the nomination to Montauban ever occurred he had told the Archbishop of Baltimore, "I would like Father Taylor for my successor. . . . If I could have him named, I would willingly resign or retire."⁴⁶ The suggestion of de Neuville only reassured him on the score of qualms about leaving his diocese without a shepherd. He forwarded this letter to Baltimore in April after having written to Maréchal the preceding month, "If I am *compelled* to leave Boston, I wish Father Taylor to be my successor."⁴⁷ Maréchal's reply confirmed the hope raised by de Neuville: "If you ask the Holy Father for Mr. Taylor at once, you will obtain him."⁴⁸ When Cheverus finally decided to sail for France he said once more, "If a successor for me is necessary Mr. Taylor is always the one I want."⁴⁹ It would appear, then, that in leaving Boston Cheverus neither feared that the diocese would suffer from his departure nor that Rome would prove uncooperative. In regard to the last notion he was soon to be enlightened.

The first hints of the attitude of the Holy See appear in the correspondence soon after his arrival in Paris. Following an in-

⁴⁵ AAB, 14-L-54, January 24, 1823.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 14-L-50, November 26, 1822.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 14-L-53, March 26, 1823.

⁴⁸ Cited in a letter of Cheverus to Cardinal Somaglia, January 13, 1824, Boston copy.

⁴⁹ AAB, 14-L-57, September 3, 1823.

terview with the Papal Nuncio, Macchi, the latter forwarded a request for Cheverus' translation on November 23 with the comment, "A prelate so distinguished will be without doubt an acquisition for the Church of Montauban, and therefore a true loss for that of Boston where his indefatigable zeal worked so much good for the Catholic religion."⁵⁰ In writing of the interview to Taylor, Cheverus himself said that Rome wished his return to Boston, adding, "I have told Mgr le Nonce that I am ready to do it."⁵¹ A month later, from his family home in Mayenne, Cheverus wrote again to Taylor, "There is still a feeble glimmering of hope that I may return to Boston. The Pope's Nuncio . . . wishes it much. I quitted Paris and left everything in the hands of the Nuncio. I expect a letter from him and will immediately return to Paris."⁵² He did not know that on December 10 Cardinal Somaglia in Rome had notified Propaganda that a letter was even then being sent to Paris expressing the desire of His Holiness that the Bishop of Boston should not be transferred. It was a summons from the Great Chaplain that brought Cheverus back to Paris as 1823 ended.

Roman opposition was based primarily upon American considerations. Archbishop Maréchal in Baltimore protested both directly and indirectly to Rome during the autumn of Cheverus' departure from Boston. On September 10 he wrote to Dr. Robert Gradwell, rector of the English College and Maréchal's Roman agent, begging him to see Cardinal Consalvi. The picture he painted of American conditions and Cheverus' indispensability was detailed and included the Hogan troubles in Philadelphia, the disdain for religion in New York, the scandalous dissensions in Charleston and the Carolinas, and immorality and impiety in New Orleans. There were only two dioceses where peace and religion reigned: Baltimore and Boston. How could he, Maréchal, go on without Cheverus?

Although considerably far away from me, nevertheless, Mgr. de Cheverus is a companion-in-arms infinitely precious to me

⁵⁰ Arch. Secret. Vat. Rub. 248, Boston copy, Vincenzo Macchi to Cardinal Secretary of State, November 23, 1823.

⁵¹ Cited in a letter of Taylor to Maréchal, January 20, 1824.

⁵² *United States Catholic Miscellany*, II, 173, Cheverus to Taylor, December 26, 1823.

in the midst of the battles which the Church is fighting here. If he is taken away, I fear my post is not tenable. The consequence will be that in a little while I would be forced to resign. . . . I beg you to represent (1) that the King of France can find a 100 excellent priests for the See of Montauban (2) that the loss of Mgr. Cheverus will play a large part in religion in America . . . his translation would be a scandal.⁵³

This same plea was also sent directly to Propaganda and an "audience" of December 7 discussed Maréchal's protests.⁵⁴ On December 9 this hearing was reported to the Cardinal Secretary of State, and it was the day following that he in turn, notified Cardinal Decamo that both Cheverus and the king's Great Chaplain were to be informed of the pope's opposition, through the office of the nuncio in Paris.

Thus it was that on Wednesday, January 2, 1824, Cheverus read at Mayenne this urgent note from the Prince de Croij:

An affair of greatest importance requires your presence at Paris. I beg you, Monseigneur, to start as soon as you receive this. I am truly sorry to trouble the repose which you need so much after so many dangers and fatigues; but you will judge for yourself when you learn the gravity of the question I have to propose to you that it is absolutely impossible to spare you the hardships of travel.⁵⁵

Cheverus left at once for Paris, where he arrived at four o'clock on Sunday afternoon. Although Cheverus played down the urgency of this visit when writing of it to his brother,⁵⁶ other documentary evidence indicates that the Great Chaplain had received word of papal opposition and asked Cheverus to go at once to the nuncio and to make clear his personal desire to go to Montauban. The meeting between Cheverus and Prince de Croij took place at eight o'clock Sunday evening. Wednesday at noon Cheverus saw the nuncio, having been delayed by illness for two days at the home of his cousin, at 3 Cul de Sac Ferou. As soon as the meeting with the nuncio was terminated Cheverus reported it to the Great Chaplain:

⁵³ Arch. Prop. Fide, U.S. 61-870, Boston copy.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Lettere, vol. 304, fol. 816, Boston copy.

⁵⁵ Archives Nationales, F19-2538, December 29, 1823.

⁵⁶ Private Archives de Plinval, Boston copy, undated.

He informed me of His Holiness' desire that I return to America where he believed I was needed; but he added that the Sovereign Pontiff did not wish to displease the King. He told me all that was required of me was to remain neutral and conform to whatever was decided between your Highness and himself. . . . This conference would only hinge upon the situation of the churches in America.

Cheverus enclosed a copy of a memorandum he had placed in the nuncio's hands giving the reasons why he wished to remain in France: lack of means for a return voyage, health, and reluctance to break his promise to the king. He concluded his letter: "I hope your Highness will be satisfied . . . and that it will end all uncertainty."⁵⁷

The reaction of the Great Chaplain is not evident, but a clue may be found in the fact that Cheverus wrote to the nuncio on January 14 emphasizing the reason of health more strongly. This time he said that if the pope did not issue bulls for Montauban, he would be obliged to retire from the episcopacy altogether and live with his family.⁵⁸ Whether or not it was the shrewdness of the Prince de Croij which perceived that reason of health would settle the argument in Rome, that argument was the plea that weighted the scales. Cardinal Somaglia notified Propaganda on February 14 that Cheverus' health was the principal reason to accept his translation.⁵⁹ On February 21 it was announced that Cheverus would go to Montauban. The same day Propaganda informed Cheverus himself that the letter from Paris in January setting forth the causes prohibiting his return to Boston was acceptable to Leo XII; Maréchal was notified that he should propose a new bishop for Boston; and to Anthony Kohlmann, S.J., of New York was despatched a letter asking for information on William Taylor.⁶⁰

The news of Roman acquiescence reached Paris on March 4.⁶¹ On May 3, 1824, in a consistory at Rome Jean Lefebvre de Cheverus was officially confirmed Bishop of Montauban, and on June

⁵⁷ Archives Nationales, F19-2538, January 9, 1824.

⁵⁸ Arch. Secret. Vat. Segret. di Stato, 30585, Rub. 248, Boston copy.

⁵⁹ Arch. Prop. Fide, S.R.C. 9-934, fol. 393, Boston copy.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, fol. 394, Boston copy.

⁶¹ Arch. Secret. Vat. Segret. di Stato, 32325, Rub. 643, Nuncio to Cardinal Secretary of State, March 4, 1824, Boston copy.

23 the king signed the ordinance for the publication of the bulls in Latin and French. It was a year and a half, lacking a month, after the ordinance nominating Cheverus; but at last he was officially Bishop of Montauban.⁶² In the Roman aspect of the "Cheverus problem" certain factors seem to have carried great weight: the insistence of the French government activated by the Great Chaplain; the conciliatory attitude of the new Pope Leo XII, who wished to defer to the wishes of the French king when possible;⁶³ and the influence of Cheverus' own wishes once they were clearly known, with special consideration for his stated reason of health.

The most interesting questions yet remain: why did Cheverus himself wish to go to Montauban, and when did this wish become uppermost in his mind? Neither the necessities of France nor the negotiations with Rome have precisely answered these questions, even though clues have surely been suggested.

It will be wise to examine at the outset the personal motives which history has already ascribed to Cheverus. In a chapter entitled "The Departure of Bishop Cheverus" in the *History of the Archdiocese of Boston* these are summarized as three: sorrow over the death of Father Matignon, ill-health, and a "growing discouragement about conditions and the outlook in the American Church."⁶⁴ Robert H. Lord elsewhere implied another factor related to the problem. In an essay on Cheverus printed in the *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* Lord commented in one place, "He had something of eighteenth-century sensibility. His tears flowed easily; he loved friendships . . ." and later, in discussing the reasons for the departure from Boston, "What finally broke down his resistance was a rather stern letter . . . from the Prince de Croij threatening him with the severe displeasure of Louis XVIII and serious consequences for his family and friends if he persisted in his refusal."⁶⁵ Whether

⁶² Archives Nationales, F19-674, fol. 473.

⁶³ Pius VII died on August 20, 1823, in his eighty-first year. Annibale della Genga who succeeded him as Leo XII brought a spirit of conciliation to his brief reign of six years. With his accession Guilio della Somaglia replaced Consalvi as Secretary of State.

⁶⁴ Lord *et al.*, *Archdiocese of Boston*, I, 782.

⁶⁵ *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, LV (January, 1933), 68, 77.

or not one agrees with this evaluation of the Great Chaplain's letter, the two quotations taken together do suggest a fourth motive which might be termed family feeling or human respect. A fifth motive attributed as early as 1825, and which must be mentioned since it was expressed by a friend and contemporary, is found in a letter from the Bishop of Louisiana, William Valentine Dubourg, to Cardinal Somaglia: "None of us indeed has the least doubt that the smallness of the diocese of Boston was the chief cause why the Right Rev. Chéverus lent a most willing hand to his transfer from there."⁶⁶

What evaluation can be placed on these five personal motives? At the very outset one may eliminate the notion that ambition played any part. Unless Cheverus was a consistent hypocrite there was never a time in his clerical career that he did not resist honors, suspect his own capacities, or dread advancement. Dubourg, who made the remark, was never noted for his soundness of ultimate judgment; he was, rather, quick to voice personal opinion, and by his own admission possessed a nature "rather bordering on indiscretion than reserve."⁶⁷

The sorrow over loss of his dearest friend and colleague leaves no uncertainty as to its degree. All the letters of Cheverus written immediately after Francis Matignon's death attest that Boston was no longer the same after September 18, 1818. Cheverus *was* stunned by the blow. He often expressed the wish to die soon in order that the union of twenty-two years could be continued in heaven.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, two facts diminish the potency of sorrow as a primary cause: that he did remain for five more years after his friend's death; and his own reply to Maréchal's suggestion in 1818 that Rome might consent to Cheverus' transfer to another see. Cheverus had then asserted, "My intention is to live here and die here; I shall never consent to a translation."⁶⁹ Although the years did not diminish the sorrow he felt,

⁶⁶ *St. Louis Historical Review*, III (1921), 192, Dubourg to Somaglia, October 6, 1825.

⁶⁷ Annabelle M. Melville, *Elizabeth Bayley Seton, 1774-1821* (New York, 1951), p. 169.

⁶⁸ Letters to Maréchal, and to his sister-in-law between October 7 and November 14, 1818, include such references.

⁶⁹ Lord *et al.*, *Archdiocese of Boston*, I, 781, note.

Cheverus was not consciously influenced by it to leave Boston. In 1821 he told his brother, "The loss of my worthy friend has, in truth, rendered my situation most harsh and sad, and I know that in your arms I would find a sweet retreat, but I do not know how to leave this establishment. Unfortunately for it and for me, I am too necessary. It has reached the point where, although I have three priests with me, I can scarcely absent myself for a few days."⁷⁰

The third motive is more difficult to assess. The references to ill-health both before and after his departure are so numerous as almost to discourage a definitive conclusion. What *was* the condition of Cheverus' health, how consistently did it effect his course of action, and under what precise circumstances did it become a weighty factor in his translation? Jean Cardinal de Cheverus, Archbishop of Bordeaux, died of apoplexy in the middle of his sixty-ninth year as a result of overexertion in the excessive heat of southern France in the summer of 1836. This is the unanimous verdict of his biographers. During his life time he suffered from such common distresses as severe colds, persistent coughing, catarrh, inflammation of the lungs, infected teeth, and discontent with the rigors of New England winters, to name those he cited himself. On occasion he was very depressed by not feeling well; again, he could be quite humorous and write lightly to his relatives, "After several debates between it [health] and me all is arranged and amiable."⁷¹ When ill-health and sorrow coincided in a person of his sensibilities, he could sound very depressed, indeed.

But did these distresses, physical or psychical, notably affect his activity? The record of Cheverus' exertions in youth during the Terror, in early manhood in New England, in later life in Montauban and Bordeaux indicate that he was one of those small men who are capable of enormous energy and indefatigable zeal. The stories of his hardihood in rain, snow, and oppressive heat are legion. What invalid today would walk from Salem to Boston in performance of duty? At Montauban in the worst flood in half a century the little bishop stood with the icy January

⁷⁰ Private Archives de Plinval, Cheverus to his brother, March 3, 1821.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, Cheverus to his sister-in-law, November 22, 1825.

waters of the Tarn above his knees to help rescue his flock and their furniture. In Boston during the War of 1812 he personally helped barricade the city. "He always rose very early, at four o'clock in summer, and at half-past four in winter;"⁷² and on occasion sawed wood for parishioners before breakfast. Although no one would deny that piety and zeal can work miracles, and Cheverus was both pious and zealous, the total picture of the prelate who survived shipwreck in the chill November waters of the English Channel in 1823, and lived almost to the scriptural three score years and ten, is one that warrants the conclusion that health *should* not have been the chief reason for reaching a major decision.

But was it a reason at the time the decision was reached? Certainly the health of the Bishop of Boston led de Neuville to suggest to the Prince of Croij that it might be a lever to pry Cheverus away from Boston. Certainly Cheverus cited health as the second of three reasons he gave to the nuncio in January, 1824, for remaining in France. And the argument of health was decisive in Rome. On the other hand, health was not the reason why Cheverus decided to go to France in the autumn of 1823. In April he had told Maréchal, in announcing his first decision to stay, "My health is much better than it was two years ago and does not need a trip to France. I stay here."⁷³ He said as much to his relatives in France.⁷⁴ Why did he then use this argument in Paris in January, 1824? The chronology shows that he was summoned urgently by the Great Chaplain, had the interview on Sunday, was ill on Monday and Tuesday, and gave his reasons to the nuncio on Wednesday. Thus three alternatives: his illness caused him to reassess his physical resources; upon the suggestion of Prince de Croij he used health as one of the arguments likely to secure Roman consent; or a combination of both illness and suasion. Such an examination of the health motive offers a solution far from satisfactory.

To much the same degree the suggestion that discouragement led Cheverus to abandon Boston fails to satisfy. To admit the

⁷² Hamon-Stewart, *Life of Cardinal Cheverus* (Boston, 1839), p. 294.

⁷³ AAB, 14-L-56, Cheverus to Maréchal, April 21, 1823.

⁷⁴ Archives Nationales, F-19-2538, de la Vigerie to Besson, June 18, 1823.

sorry aspects of the Boston scene says nothing of the character of the man, which under all other difficulties attending his career never caused him to falter. On those occasions when he did speak of retiring it was always in connection with the attractiveness of religious seclusion, a desire to be reunited with his family before he died, or a conviction that a younger man of Anglo-Saxon origins would be more suited to the American scene. Spirituality, filial devotion, and humility are scarcely synonyms for cowardice and defeatism. So his first words on receiving word of the nomination: "This news surprises me and afflicts me and comes most unfortunately at this holy time. I am very sick. I wish to avoid this translation if it is possible."⁷⁵ These are scarcely the sentiments of a man receiving word of welcome reprieve. When he forwarded his refusal to Paris he said that he had consulted Baltimore, Montreal, and Quebec. "They all know the truth of my diocese. It is such that my departure would cause much harm."⁷⁶ It was the very condition of Boston that prompted his refusal. Yet six months later he was in France.

To what extent did family pressures and human respect factors influence Cheverus' decision? In May following his April decision to stay in Boston Cheverus wrote to a friend in Montreal:

I have received letters from my Brother and Sisters. They are heart-broken. They were waiting with so much joy and impatience. . . . Please pray for me. . . . The positive decision of my Superior seemed to me the voice of God. I conformed but the sacrifice cost me dear. It is done. May the Lord accept it and sustain me. I am still far from tranquil.⁷⁷

His distress shows even more clearly in a letter to his brother that summer. He had had no word from them since the joyous letters of anticipation they had written in February.

What can I do? I have found no one who does not tell me I must stay. I think if you were here you would say the same.

⁷⁵ AAB, 14-L-53, Cheverus to Maréchal, March 26, 1823. The news arrived during Lent.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 14-L-55, copy of Cheverus to Prince de Croij, April 30, 1823. The original is in the Archives Nationales in Cheverus File, F19-2538.

⁷⁷ Bibliothèque St. Sulpice, Montreal, Cheverus to Le Saulnier, May 7, 1823. Boston copy.

If you don't believe me, at least pity me. I am necessary to religion. . . . Surely the French clergy can furnish a worthy shepherd for Montauban. . . . My dear Sisters, Brother, Nephews, Nieces, forgive me but love me. If you knew all you would see what a sacrifice I do make in duty.⁷⁸

Yet, in spite of his distress, his decision was still to stay in Boston.

Then he received two letters which immeasurably increased his anxiety. One was the strong letter of July 12 from the Great Chaplain giving the reasons why Cheverus was needed in France: "I have explained the motives for recalling you to the King. He applauded, showing full satisfaction." Now Cheverus' refusal had arrived. "When he learned the contents of your letter he was displeased." Cheverus must hasten to come to France.⁷⁹ That this summons shook his decision is evident in a letter Cheverus wrote on shipboard: "My refusal would not be accepted, and the Great Chaplain wrote to me in the name of his Majesty that I would incur *his displeasure* if, against his *express wish*, I did not come to France."⁸⁰ To Simon Bruté, his friend in Emmitsburg, he wrote hastily before sailing, "I cannot enter into details. In May I followed step by step the course our worthy archbishop indicated. I sent the letter to the Great Chaplain. Instead of accepting my refusal the King orders me . . . not to displease him too long. I leave, my heart in anguish, against my inclination."⁸¹

The second letter was from his cousin by marriage, Moreau de la Vigerie. This relative, who was a councillor of the Royal Court of Paris, had interested himself in Cheverus' concerns through Father J. F. Besson, then secretary to the Great Chaplain and soon to become Bishop of Metz.⁸² Now, on learning of Cheverus' first refusal to return to France he wrote reproachfully that the Bishop of Boston had nearly cost his good and sensible brother his life, that De Neuville was very upset at having been

⁷⁸ Archives de Notre Dame de Mayenne, Cheverus to Louis Lefebvre de Cheverus, July 29, 1823. Boston copy.

⁷⁹ Archives Nationales, F19-2538.

⁸⁰ *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society*, XII (1901), 359-361, Cheverus to the Marquis de Bonneuil, October 30, 1823.

⁸¹ AUND, Cheverus to Bruté, September 24, 1823.

⁸² Archives Nationales, F19-2538, Moreau de la Vigerie to Abbé Besson, June 18, 1823.

compromised with the Prince de Croij. "You have to obey the king and respond to his kindness," he insisted. "You must leave before a second refusal sorely offends the king, the Great Chaplain, de Neuville, and de Valnais who are so attached to you. It afflicts us excessively and puts your family in mourning. Montauban is a widow until you arrive."⁸³

On receipt of these two letters Cheverus decided to go to France. On August 30 he wrote to both the Prince de Croij and his cousin that he would sail early in October, hoping to arrive in France early in November.⁸⁴ On September 3 he told Maréchal, "I must go. . . . If I can get them to let me return I will be here in the spring."⁸⁵ When Maréchal passed the news on to Gradwell in Rome he commented, "He tells me it is his plan to return to Boston next spring. As for me, I think he will stay in France; he is lost to our America. I know the great sensibility of his soul and it seems to me that he will not be able to resist the prompting of his family, united to the wishes of the Great Chaplain, or even more, those of Mr. Hyde de Neuville, who is the author of this nomination."⁸⁶ The archbishop knew his friend better than Cheverus knew himself. The latter continued to speak of returning to Boston until January 1824. He believed circumstances, once he arrived in France, prevented his return. He told Bruté afterward, "I found myself in a situation allowing no escape. Another . . . with more force and virtue could perhaps have succeeded. If you believe it, have pity on me and forgive it."⁸⁷ But subconsciously he had reached a de-

⁸³ *Ibid.*, undated. Joseph Dupas de Valnais had come to Boston as consul in 1779. During the French Revolution he had spent ten years of exile in Italy. The Restoration saw him returned to Boston as consul. In 1822 he returned to France, according to one account; but a note of the Great Chaplain attached to a Cheverus letter dated April 30, 1823 reads, "The French Consul at Boston Chevalier de Valnais brought me the enclosed papers." In any case, while de Valnais lived in Boston Cheverus dined with him and his daughter Calista, and took tea at their house on First Street.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* The letter to the Great Chaplain is in the Cheverus File. Knowledge of his letter to Vigerie is found in the latter's to Besson of October 5, 1823, in the same file.

⁸⁵ AAB, 14-L-57, Cheverus to Maréchal.

⁸⁶ Arch. Prop. Fide, U.N.S. 61-870. Boston copy. September 10, 1823.

⁸⁷ AUND, Cheverus to Bruté, April 21, 1824.

cision in August.⁸⁸ His reasons for remaining in France given to the nuncio in January were only the conscious apology for a *fait accompli*.

Cheverus' personal motives include a sixth, and hitherto, undiscussed factor, implicit in much of the correspondence of 1823. When Cheverus first wrote to France after receiving notice of his nomination he told the Prince de Croij that the news had placed him in a terrible position. "Sentiments compounded of surprise, devotion to the King, love of country, what I owe to my flock here, to religion, etc., have produced a violent agitation." For days he could only weep and pray without being able to resolve anything.⁸⁹ Here, in essence, *was* the "Cheverus problem." He did love the Church; he did love Boston. But he was, in addition, a Frenchman, and devoted to legitimate monarchy as represented by the Bourbon dynasty. Without understanding this fact, it is impossible to comprehend fully why those two letters he received in August of 1823 produced such a *volte-face*.

Not long after Cheverus was installed in Montauban Louis XVIII died. The new Bishop of Montauban pronounced the king's eulogy in the Cathedral of the Assumption on September 22, 1824. The local press commented that this allocution was one of the worthiest monuments raised to the late king. Cheverus began by tracing the great virtue the king had exhibited, in his English exile as on his French throne. He likened him to Saint Louis in piety and wisdom, to Louis XII in justice, and to the great Henry IV in magnanimity. Then, passing to the king's devotion to his subjects, he asked how it was possible not to regret the loss of a ruler so Christian, a king so excellent. Looking at the assembled public officials, the bishop said feelingly, "You are too good Frenchmen, too devoted to legitimate monarchy not to shed tears at the death of this tender, august father." And to the military he cried, "I speak to you, too, brave soldiers that you are, who have served with glory your prince and fatherland, and who have hearts too sensitive not to mourn at the tomb of this best of Kings!" Then pausing in obvious emotion, he gazed on

⁸⁸ Letters to Bruté and Marquis de Bonneuil (see notes 80, 81) indicate this.

⁸⁹ See note 76.

all with glistening eyes. "I have tears for such an event," he said in choking accents. "I have no words."⁹⁰ Although a funeral oration need not present the ultimate judgment of history on its subject, this eulogy, given with more than his usual fervor, does reveal much about Jean Lefebvre de Cheverus.

There are many indications that during the whole thirty years of his exile Cheverus never faltered in his devotion to his country and his king. The initial anguish of his flight from France in 1792 was never forgotten. A few years after his departure from Boston Samuel L. Knapp writing in the *Boston Monthly Magazine* said, "He never spoke of his suffering . . . without being so much affected as to distress his friends; and they forebore to make those inquiries or to learn those details, which would now be so deeply interesting to the community."⁹¹ It is quite clear that he seriously considered returning to France in 1801.⁹² As late as March 31, 1803, he continued to feel that Napoleon's Concordat with Rome had effected enough reform to make his return tolerable. Only the urgings of Bishop Carroll turned him from a decision in that year.⁹³ But he never ceased longing to see, as Matignon did, "the monstrous atheistical government of France destroyed, to give place to the Restoration of Religion & Monarchy."⁹⁴ When Napoleon was overthrown in 1814 Cheverus wrote joyously to his brother:

⁹⁰ Daux, *Montauban*, II, Section VIII, 58-59. The emotional intensity of the occasion was described in the *Journal Tarn-et-Garonne*, September 25, 1824.

⁹¹ Samuel L. Knapp, "Memoir of Bishop Cheverus," *Boston Monthly Magazine*, I (June, 1825), 4.

⁹² Matignon told Carroll in a letter dated September 10, 1801, "Mr. Cheverus . . . is still of the same disposition and waits impatiently for ulterior news of France." But much more light on the matter is thrown in Bertrand de Broussillon, *Une lettre écrite en 1802 par le futur Cardinal de Cheverus* (Le Mans, 1893). Broussillon says that the Concordat of 1801 led the former parishioners of Cheverus at Mayenne to ask him to return. Cheverus wrote to Abbé François-René Jean Bignon, a curate at Mayenne, when the former was there in 1790-1791, on January 18, 1802, from Newcastle, Maine. He said he was ready to leave for France as soon as he had news that the new French arrangements were completed, and a replacement could be found for him in Boston. "If the Lord permits it," Cheverus added, "I want to end my days in your midst."

⁹³ Carroll to Cheverus, April 9, 1803. Cited in Knapp, "Memoir," pp. 20, 21.

⁹⁴ Archives of the Archdiocese of Quebec, Matignon to Plessis, January 31, 1799. Boston copy.

Blessed be the God of Mercy who has given you peace and replaced on the throne the descendant of Saint Louis, Henry IV, and the brother of the holy martyr, our good King Louis XVI! Today more than ever, my beloved brother, it would be sweet to fly to your arms, but duty chains me here and it is above all in times of distress that a pastor ought not to leave his flock.⁹⁵

Copies of *L'Ami de la Religion et du Roi* which Cheverus and Matignon received from Paris were read avidly. The two men followed with interest, sometimes with impatience, the progress of the Restoration in France. To them a government which allowed murmuring and criticism was very indulgent. But they were eager to see the vacant sees filled, the lot of the clergy ameliorated. "What slowness," Matignon exclaimed in 1817, "in terminating the accord with the Pope."⁹⁶ Even the passing of days in the liturgical calendar turned their thoughts homeward. Matignon could write, "I spent a very joyous St. Louis, and have been in spirit in Paris."⁹⁷ While Cheverus would confide to Bruté, "Today, the feast of St. Denis, our dear France occupies our thoughts. She is the object of our prayers and affections."⁹⁸

Cheverus was particularly devoted to the Bourbons. His sentiments in regard to Louis XVI were obvious in his letter to Theodore Lyman in 1823. On the eve of his departure Cheverus gave to the Boston Athenaeum his collection of books and mementoes with the words, "I send with this a fac-simile of the testament of Louis XVI and his horribly calumniated consort. It will perhaps enhance the value of these interesting documents when my literary friends know that they have often been bedewed with my tears."⁹⁹ He had additional reasons of gratitude for revering the brother who became Louis XVIII. It was the latter who had given the teen-age Cheverus his first benefice on December 31, 1779, a benefice whose revenues Cheverus enjoyed until his ex-

⁹⁵ Private Archives de Plinval, Cheverus to brother, January 22, 1815.

⁹⁶ Bibliothèque St. Sulpice, Montreal, Matignon to Le Saulnier, May 11, 1817. Boston copy.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, August 27, 1815.

⁹⁸ AUND, Cheverus to Bruté, October 9, 1816.

⁹⁹ Department of Manuscripts of the Boston Athenaeum, Cheverus to Theodore Lyman, September 25, 1823.

ile.¹⁰⁰ There is every reason to believe that the possibility of offending the king was a very real factor in Cheverus' final decision to go to France in August, 1823.¹⁰¹ Once arrived there, there was no question of his sentiments. He spoke in unmistakable words to the Great Chaplain, when he said that after having reflected on the matter before God, he believed he could not resist the commands of the king. "I have already seen, since my return to my fatherland, with consolation that my efforts could contribute to uphold the altar and the legitimate monarchy, sacred causes to which I have devoted my whole life."¹⁰² As Cheverus put it a year after his decision, "I still believe, as I did in Boston, that I could not help coming to France, & once here my return, much as I wished it, became impracticable."¹⁰³

In the final analysis, the solution of the "Cheverus problem," then, lies in the fusion of particular chronological circumstances and particular human aspects of the man himself. When all are taken together the "problem" vanishes. Nothing in a most thorough study of the decision of Cheverus in 1823 need cast any reflection on the integrity and virtue of the Bishop of Boston who was to die as Cardinal Archbishop of Bordeaux. Later events vindicate the bishop's choice. Boston was to be blessed with the person of Benedict Fenwick. France in her turn was to feel the benefits in Paris,¹⁰⁴ as well as in Montauban and Bordeaux, of

¹⁰⁰ AABO, Torbechet File. For other details on the benefice cf. Bertrand de Broussillon, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7; Archives Nationales, P-2084-2085.

¹⁰¹ Letters to Baltimore, Montreal, and Quebec contain such expressions as these: "I want to refuse, but could I do it without going myself to cast myself at the feet of Louis XVIII?" "Can I make a decent refusal without going myself to the feet of Louis XVIII?" Maréchal tried to offset this concern by saying, "We have such a high opinion of the piety and religion of Louis XVIII that we believe he would not be offended by a refusal." Chevalier de Valnais told the Minister of Foreign Affairs in June of 1823 he believed that Cheverus would change his mind if the king would formally express his personal wish that Cheverus accede. When Chateaubriand passed the opinion on to the Great Chaplain, the latter acted upon it and said in his letter of July 12 to Cheverus, "The assurance of the will of the King . . . will confirm . . . I doubt not, all the other reasons [for a return to France]."

¹⁰² Archives Nationales, F19-2538, Cheverus to Great Chaplain, January 7, 1824.

¹⁰³ Creagh Library, St. John's Seminary at Brighton, Massachusetts, Cheverus to John McNamara, July 26, 1824.

¹⁰⁴ The creation of Cheverus cardinal in 1836 played an important part in improving relations between the government of Louis-Philippe and Rome, as the writer hopes to show in a longer biographical study.

the return of the saintly little prelate whose heart was so torn by the necessity of that choice. A man of sensibility he was indeed, but a man of perfect submission as well. One needs to be a little more French and a little less American, perhaps, to comprehend how Cheverus might see the ultimate will of God expressed in the wishes of a Bourbon king and a French archbishop rather than in the desires of the Archbishop of Baltimore and the laymen of Boston. *His* conscience was clear. And the longer one regards the conscience of Jean Lefebvre de Cheverus, the more satisfied one becomes that in the end he brought the "Cheverus problem" to a happy resolution.

JAMES WHITFIELD, FOURTH ARCHBISHOP OF BALTIMORE: THE EARLY YEARS, 1770-1828

BY BOSCO DAVID CESTELLO, O.S.B.*

THE late 18th-century England into which James Whitfield was born was the England of a mercantile oligarchy with "Farmer George" as its head, and the Tory North in lead of the wealthy landlords and merchants of parliament. The country was still exulting with the victory of the Seven Years War, although it had incurred great debt to hold and spread a commercial empire whose tentacles stretched to distant India and Australia. Across the Atlantic the irate colonies in North America were brewing to the stage of revolution in face of unjust taxation, tariff restraints, and stringent industrial restrictions. George III's succession to the throne in 1760 brought changes to the English government, and its commercial policy, and had given a slight glimmer of hope to the minority Catholic population. The mellowing attitude toward Catholics did not consist in a tolerance for their religious faith, but rather in a recognition of the contribution they could make toward the war effort and its financial burden.¹ The statute books, indeed, still held laws against the papists, the most recent of which in 1767 had offered a reward of £100 to anyone who informed on the movement of priests.

Into this unwanted minority, James Whitfield, just a day old,² was baptised on November 4, 1770, in St. Mary's Chapel at Liverpool.³ It was the same church that had been rebuilt after a Protestant mob had destroyed the former warehouse chapel in 1759, which, in turn, had been the replacement of a chapel destroyed on April 30, 1746.⁴ But Liverpool Catholics were of sturdy faith, not to be daunted by the burning of their chapels, and of such was the Whitfield family.

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¹ David Mathew, *Catholicism in England, 1535-1935* (London, 1935), p. 141.

² According to the apostolic indult for dispensation from dimissorial letters granted by Pius VII to Whitfield on August 14, 1808, he had been born on November 3, 1770. The original document is preserved in the archives of the Archdiocese of Lyons.

³ Archives of the Archdiocese of Baltimore (hereafter AAB), 23-A-V-1.

⁴ Thomas Burke, *Catholic History of Liverpool* (Liverpool, 1910), p. 11.

Owing to paucity of documents one of the few facts known about Whitfield's father is in a brief entry in *Gore's Directory* of 1774, "Whitfield James, merchant 13 Bixteth Street."⁵ The title "merchant" would seem to place the Whitfields in considerably better circumstances than the average Catholic family, which had to struggle against either active persecution if rich or complete indifference if poor.⁶ Seven years later James Whitfield was listed with Charles Whitfield, presumably a relative, as having an earthenware warehouse at 6 Strand Street in Liverpool.⁷ One of the docks at the present-day port is still called the "Herculaneum," all that remains of the former china and crockery factory which once stood at Strand Street near the site of the Whitfield warehouse.⁸ The only other member of the Whitfield family of which anything is known was John, who most likely was the godfather of young James, described as a "cowkeeper in Elbow Lane."⁹ On the maternal side, there is even more obscurity, leaving only James' mother's maiden name, Anne Genders, no doubt of some relationship to his godmother, Sarah Genders; and the year of her birth, 1742, in the county of Stafford.¹⁰

In the bustling port of Liverpool, James as a young boy must have found many things to gaze upon in wide-eyed curiosity—the merchant ships in the harbor loading and unloading their cargoes, gangs of slaves bearing the burden of the load, and the Catholics quietly slipping into the chapel on Edmund Street¹¹ to avoid

⁵ (Liverpool, 1774), p. 59.

■ Mathew, *Catholicism*, p. 145.

⁷ *Gore's Directory*, 1781, p. 90.

⁸ Abbot Aloysius A. Lightbound, O.S.B., to the writer, Liverpool, May 23, 1955.

⁹ *Ibid.*, "The only other Whitfield I can find in the old directories is John Whitfield—who was certainly a Catholic and who lived in this parish."

¹⁰ These facts were obtained from an extract from the civil registers of deaths at Lyons. 23-D-12.

¹¹ The original chapel of St. Mary's was located in Lumber Street, but was destroyed by rioters on April 30, 1746. A second chapel, which was built at Edmund Street, was destroyed by a Protestant mob in 1759 and another rebuilt. The foundation stone for a fine Gothic church was laid on May 1, 1845, during the ministry of Dom Thomas W. Fisher, O.S.B., and the completed structure remained until 1884. At this time, to make way for the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway Company, the church was removed and reconstructed on Highfield Street, the present location of

being noticed by persecuting eyes and informing tongues. Newman's boyhood impression of London could well have been acquired in Liverpool at this time:

And then, perhaps, as we went to and fro, looking with a boy's curious eyes through the great city, we might come to-day upon some Moravian chapel, or Quaker's meeting house, and tomorrow on a chapel of the "Roman Catholics": but nothing was to be gathered from it, except that there were lights burning there, and some boys in white, swinging censers; and what it all meant could only be learned from books, from Protestant Histories and Sermons; and they did not report well of "the Roman Catholics," but, on the contrary, deposed that they had once had power and had abused it.¹²

The war with the American colonies had, of course, increased activity at the thriving port as it likewise afforded some respite to the Catholic population. In June 1778, a Catholic Relief Act permitted the papists to purchase or inherit property; prosecution of the clergy by informers was abolished; and a simple oath of loyalty to the crown was required. But these minor concessions brought on riots and the burning of Catholic chapels in June 1780.¹³ James Whitfield, perhaps to his good fortune, was too young to realize, except in questioning wonder, the attitude of his fellow countrymen toward his Catholic faith. He spent his youth in Liverpool during days when the condition of Catholics was at its lowest point.¹⁴

It was not only a low point for Catholics, but also for the fortunes of the English in general since France, Spain, and Holland had joined forces with the American colonies on all fronts. By the treaties of 1783 at Paris and Versailles, England conceded independence to the thirteen colonies, and Spain received the territory of Florida as well as the island of Minorca in the Mediterranean. These humiliations stirred the populace and cries for reform were heard in Parliament for more democratic repre-

St. Mary's. It was again destroyed by enemy bombing in 1941, rebuilt after the war, and opened once more in 1953. (Lightbound, letter to writer).

¹² "The Second Spring," *Favorite Newman Sermons*, selected by Daniel M. O'Connell (New York, 1932), p. 20.

¹³ Mathew, *Catholicism*, p. 143.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

sentation, religious tolerance, and the complete curtailment of slave traffic. The last two reforms, had they eventualized, would undoubtedly have been of some interest to the Catholic Whitfields at Liverpool where they experienced pressure in practicing their faith, and witnessed the plight of thousands of slaves who passed through the port. Liverpool traders were annually bringing in some 27,000 slaves for resale in the West Indies, a source of much of the city's wealth.¹⁵ Thus in Whitfield's youthful mind there had been implanted a sympathy for these unfortunates, which would later bear fruit in the days of his episcopacy. As a budding merchant learning the trade of his father, James may have had to make a decision on the ethics of using human beings to acquire wealth and economic security as compared to possible success with a less lucrative crockery enterprise.

Suddenly on Sunday, September 9, 1787, Whitfield had forced upon him the responsibilities of manhood with the unexpected death of his father.¹⁶ Most probably he was an only child and thus the sole support for his widowed mother. Important decisions were now in his hands, although he was but seventeen years of age. Anne Whitfield seems to have been of uncertain health¹⁷ and her acute bereavement would have increased her frailty.

Not long after the death of Mr. Whitfield, mother and son decided to remove to Leghorn, in Italy. There English Catholics were welcomed and tolerated;¹⁸ sufficient commercial opportunities for a young merchant were available; the healthful climate of a Mediterranean port offered restoration to a sickly widow. Information about their journey and their long stay in Italy is lacking.¹⁹

Leghorn owed its prominence to the Medici family of the 16th and 17th centuries, beginning with Ferdinand I (d. 1609) who chose the site to be developed as a commercial port in preference

¹⁵ Jean Trepp, "The Liverpool Movement for the Abolition of the English Slave Trade," *Journal of Negro History*, XIII (July, 1928), 265.

¹⁶ *Liverpool General Advertiser*, September 13, 1787.

¹⁷ *Baltimore Gazette and General Advertiser*, October 20, 1834.

¹⁸ Karl Baedeker, *Northern Italy* (Leipzig, 1913), p. 524.

¹⁹ Search in the State Archives and City Library of Leghorn, by Giulio Prunai, director of the State Archives, yielded no information. Prunai to writer, September 6, 1955.

to Pisa.²⁰ Refugees from all lands were welcomed to Leghorn—Catholics from England, Jews and Moors from Spain, merchants from Marseilles and Genoa. By the time of the Whitfields' arrival, it was a busy cosmopolitan city of some 40,000 inhabitants.²¹ No doubt they found friends and living quarters in the English section of the port. It had many features similar to Liverpool: a harbor busy with trade from all shores of the Mediterranean and distant lands, markets and shops near the docks, and lively transactions among merchants of many nations. But most comforting of all was freedom in the practice of their faith. The mineral baths at La Pussolente,²² just a short distance from the city, might even have offered the ailing English widow some renewal to her flagging energies.

After tending to the needs of his mother, young Whitfield had to look after his earthenware dealings among merchants, whose existence he may have once learned from his father at Liverpool. In his goings and comings about the city, he must have passed frequently the statue of the Grand Duke Ferdinand I towering over four chained slaves²³ cringing in the shadow of the proud Medici. Here was another scene to deepen his sympathy for the negro slave. Though Leghorn possessed few outstanding works of art, it had at least one of the most beautiful buildings of Tuscany, "Il Cisternone" with its columned portico and opened half-dome facing one of the main squares of the city.²⁴ Later at Baltimore during his ministry in its cathedral, Whitfield would have remembered the similarity of its dome to that of "Il Cisternone" with identical interior octagonal designs. Nor would it be unreasonable to assume that Whitfield would have accompanied his mother on a pilgrimage to the famous shrine of the Blessed Virgin of Monte Nero just outside Leghorn. Here a celebrated picture of the Virgin had been venerated for some 500 years, and the Italian ships continued to bid for her protection with a

²⁰ Attilio Mori, "Livorno," *Enciclopedia Italiana*, XXI, 338.

²¹ *Ibid.*, XXI, 339.

²² Baedeker, *Northern Italy*, p. 525.

²³ The slaves in bronze were the work of Petro Tacca (1577-1640), a student of John of Bologna. *Ibid.*, pp. 525, 669.

²⁴ Mori, "Livorno," XXI, 336.

salute each time they passed the hill.²⁵ It was at Leghorn also that the young merchant must have made the acquaintance of Peter Plunkett of the Society of Jesus,²⁶ who later recommended Whitfield to the Jesuits at Stonyhurst in England.²⁷

Although this refuge on the Mediterranean offered peace and consolation to the Whitfields, the times were turbulent. France was at war with England and Austria after 1792, and the Italian states were divided in their attitude toward the belligerents. Napoleon, indeed, occupied Leghorn in 1796,²⁸ and won a decisive victory at Marengo four years later. But Nelson held the seas for England. Thus the Treaty of Amiens in 1802. With peace apparently restored throughout Europe, the Whitfields, early in 1803, decided to return to England. The mother, now passed her sixtieth year, probably wished to end her days in Liverpool.

Before leaving Leghorn, James had to close his business and make arrangements for the journey homeward. Whatever funds remained after the settlement of his affairs and could not be safely carried to England, were left at the counting-house of the Filicchi brothers,²⁹ the same family later responsible for the conversion to Catholicism of the young American widow, Elizabeth Bayley Seton,³⁰ who came with her husband to Leghorn in October of this same year.³¹ The Filicchi were accustomed to receiving all English visitors,³² and the Whitfields probably had experienced this kindness during their own stay. Filippo Filicchi, who had spent some time in the United States and married Mary Cowper of Boston, was American consul at Leghorn from 1795 to 1798 by appointment of President Washington. Antonio Filic-

²⁵ Annabelle M. Melville, *Elizabeth Bayley Seton, 1774-1821* (New York, 1951), p. 74.

²⁶ Peter Plunkett to Whitfield, Leghorn, December 11, 1810. *American Catholic Historical Researches*, XVII (1900) 96.

²⁷ AAB, 21-H-3, Whitfield to Maréchal, Little Crosby, June 4, 1816.

²⁸ Luigi Salvatorelli, *A Concise History of Italy from Prehistoric Times to Our Own Day* (New York, 1940), p. 492.

²⁹ Melville, *Seton*, p. 65.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

³² Elizabeth Seton to Antonio Filicchi, August 8, 1818, from the letters of Mother Seton preserved in the family archives at Leghorn and copied by Charles L. Souvay. Archives of the Daughters of Charity, St. Joseph's Central House, Emmitsburg, Maryland.

chi, his brother, who had been studying law in Rome, returned about this time to take an active part in the Filicchi house of commerce, which now had considerable dealings in the United States. Their interest in the young Republic continued for many years, not only in its commercial but also in its religious and political fortunes.³³

With finances in good hands, James Whitfield began the journey northward in the company of his mother and another companion, whose name has not been found in available documents. Their mode or route of travel is also unknown until they reached Turin in July 1803. In a small notebook kept by Whitfield,³⁴ an itemized list of expenses gives details of their journey from Turin to Lyons. Traveling by carriage the Whitfields took the ordinary route over the Alps, stopping at Novalesa for dinner on the first day. They passed Mont-Cenis on the second, and because of her age and frailty, Mrs. Whitfield had to be carried through the passes in sedan chair.³⁵ The next town noticed in the memoranda is Chambery in France. They probably arrived in Lyons about July 22, 1803, when another itemized list of expenses begins and continues to August 29.³⁶ Indicative of the dangers of their journey is the fact that three guards were hired for protection from Turin to Chambery.³⁷

Much to their disappointment the Whitfields found themselves virtually prisoners in Lyons, since hostilities had again broken out between England and France in May 1803. In the same year, also, by coincidence that was to change the

³³ Whitfield quoted the following statement of the Filicchi in a letter to Maréchal, Little Crosby, August 20, 1816: "Those young countries want illustrious & zealous Pastors such as France can boast of having given & of still giving." AAB, 21-H-4.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 23-A-W-2. This curious little book of some thirty pages contains items from May 17, 1803, to 1812, and includes such things as a cure for burns, a method of removing stains, a cure for hydrophobia, along with expense accounts, and notes on a retreat. It ends with a list of persons who provided Whitfield with coal at Little Crosby, England, in 1812.

³⁵ This item plus a guide cost £34.8, *ibid.*, p. 3. Napoleon started to build a road through the Mont-Cenis pass in 1803, and it was completed in 1811. Karl Baedeker, *Southern France Including Corsica* (Leipzig, 1914), p. 402.

³⁶ AAB, 23-A-W-2, p. 4. The total cost of the trip from Turin to Lyons was £369.5, a considerable sum for five days of travel.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

course of the young English merchant's life, Jacques André Emery, superior general of the Sulpicians, recalled from America, to the Seminary of St. Irenaeus in Lyons, Father Ambrose Maréchal. Although it is unknown when they first met, during the next few years Whitfield and Maréchal were to enter upon a life-long friendship and understanding in their respective roles of seminarian and director at St. Irenaeus.³⁸ Realization of a calling to the priesthood must have occurred not long after his arrival in Lyons, for by 1808 Whitfield was already approaching sacred orders. Some years later he revealed to Maréchal his motive when he wrote of a desire "to save my soul (which was the principal end I had in view in leaving the world)."³⁹

Since Emery began immediately to restore the traditional Sulpician spirit and methods in the revived seminaries of his society, Whitfield's clerical training was built on the solid foundation of learning and piety. Along with proficiency in philosophy, theology, and sacred scripture, he was expected to acquire piety characterized by prudence and zeal. All attraction to thoughtless enthusiasm and novelty was curtailed by demand for sound judgment, strong character, and solid virtue. He was encouraged to develop a calm and uniform interior life, tending more to calculated action than to feverish, dissipating activity. In short, the future priest had to acquire the traditional characteristics of the Sulpicians, "*l'esprit intérieur*" and "*l'esprit ecclésiastique*." The former was to stand in contrast to external distinction and ambition, while the latter connoted an apostolic love for Christ's Church. That James Whitfield deeply imbibed this spirit was to be revealed in later life by many trials at the hands of meddling, ambitious, and turbulent ecclesiastics, too many of whom were to be found in the American Church in its formative years. That he attained distinction also in the classroom is attested by Maréchal, who noted that the English seminarian won the respect of his fellows by fine diction and keenness of argument,⁴⁰ and that

³⁸ The archives of the seminary contain no documentary trace of Whitfield. Joseph Basseville, P.S.S., superior of the seminary, in a letter to the writer, February 6, 1955. This may be due to the several suppressions of seminaries in the years following Whitfield's attendance.

³⁹ AAB, 21-H-3, Little Crosby, June 4, 1816.

⁴⁰ *Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, October 20, 1834.

he was an excellent student in both philosophy and theology.⁴¹

By November 1807 the English exile was ready to approach holy orders, but dimissorial letters had to be obtained from his bishop in England. With the war continuing between France and his home country, it was necessary to apply to the papal nuncio at Paris, Cardinal Caprara, for dispensations in order to receive minor orders. These were granted on November 21, 1807,⁴² and seven months later, July 24, 1808, Whitfield finally received tonsure and the minor orders from Claude Simon, Bishop of Grenoble. During this time Pius VII was undergoing severe trials at the hands of Bonaparte, and so strained had relations become that the pope finally withdrew his nuncio from Paris. Consequently, it was from Rome itself that dispensation from dimissorials for Whitfield's major orders had to come, on August 14, 1808. In the request it was stated that Whitfield's bishop would be pleased, since priests were badly needed for the English missions. He was to be ordained *titulo missionis*.⁴³

The days of late July 1809 were filled with joy for Anne Whitfield, now in her sixty-seventh year, as she witnessed the ordinations of her son on successive days, ending with priesthood on July 24.⁴⁴ The Bishop of Grenoble was again the ordaining prelate. What happened immediately thereafter is unknown, but it is likely that, in view of the scarcity of clergy, Whitfield exercised his ministry in one of the churches of Lyons, perhaps in the section of the city called *La Croix Rousse*, where his mother lived.⁴⁵ With England and France still at war, return to Liverpool was out of the question. Moreover, Mrs. Whitfield's age and physical weakness precluded the hardships of travel. She lived only another year and, with her son at her side, died in exile on July 4, 1810.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Charles Herbermann, *The Sulpicians in the United States* (New York, 1916), p. 181.

⁴² AAB, 23-D-6 and 23-D-7.

⁴³ Archives of the Archdiocese of Lyons, dispensation from dimissorial letters.

⁴⁴ AAB, 23-D-9.

⁴⁵ The only hint of this possibility is a reference in a letter to Maréchal, Dec. 21, 1815: "I live here Little Crosby as much among the catholics as I did at the *croix rousse* . . ."

⁴⁶ AAB, 23-D-12.

Father James Whitfield could now turn his thoughts to the English mission. War still raged all over Europe. But since there was nothing to detain him in Lyons, and being alone as a priest would make travel simpler and less dangerous, he was eager to be gone. In the following year he informed Maréchal, who had returned to Baltimore, "I had a most providential voyage in an English Cartel from Morlaix to Portsmouth where I landed without the least difficulty."⁴⁷ This was probably in the early part of December 1811, since in the same letter he stated that he reached Stonyhurst College by Christmas of the same year after having spent some days in settling affairs in London and a short time with relatives and friends.

Upon arrival in London Whitfield was warmly greeted by Marmaduke Stone, superior of the Stonyhurst Jesuits, who urged him to join the Society. In a later letter to Maréchal, Whitfield stated that he had been recommended to the Society by Peter Plunkett, S.J., who had known him at Leghorn.⁴⁸ The new arrival had been ordained to serve the missions without having made a particular oath to any bishop, although there was some understanding of his returning to his native vicariate. Before making this step Whitfield settled the property which he brought with him from Lyons. This included, besides a tidy sum of £3,000 gained from his merchant days,⁴⁹ a fine set of gold vestments which he considered, "the finest in England where however now grand vestments are found."⁵⁰ Since land prices were very high in England at the time, he placed the money in "the funds,"⁵¹ while the vestments were stored safely at his home. He mentioned to Maréchal that before arriving at Stonyhurst on Christmas day he had spent a few days with relatives and friends. It would be interesting to know who these were, but names seem to have been unimportant to him.⁵²

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 21-I-1, Little Crosby, Oct. 24, 1812.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 21-H-3.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Whitfield to Maréchal, June 4, 1816.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 21-I-1, Same to Same, October 24, 1812.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* "Funds is a general term for money lent to the government, and which constitutes the national debt." *Oxford English Dictionary*, IV, 603, col. 3.

⁵² His relatives at Liverpool seemed to have gone elsewhere by that time. "I notice that in the later editions of the Directories [Gore's] the

The quiet seclusion of the Jesuit novitiate on the banks of the Hodder River, about two miles from Stonyhurst, must have been welcome to the former merchant. According to Jesuit practice his initial probation period would have lasted two years, during which time religious perfection was to be the preoccupation as directed by the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius Loyola. With some nostalgia a former Hodder novice remembered his days there, where, "no other sounds but the murmurs of the stream as it gurgled over its pebbly bed through the deep groves that hung on either side of it were by the votaries of silence and of solitude, who were embowered in this beautiful abode."⁵³ In this quiet atmosphere Whitfield was not long in coming to a realization that he was not to become a follower of St. Ignatius and thus terminated his novitiate after a stay of six months.⁵⁴

In a letter to Maréchal the following October, Whitfield gave two reasons for his action. First, he stated that "the society of the Jesuits has not been solemnly approved by the Pope for England, he has indeed approved of the exertions made to reestablish it. . . ."⁵⁵ It was true that the position of the society in England was rather tenuous, since the pope had not informed the Congregation of Propaganda of his approval.⁵⁶ When the English bishops received word of the Stonyhurst activities, they had questioned Propaganda and had been informed by the Prefect,

name Whitfield no longer occurs at all among the residents of Liverpool. I am speaking from memory but I am fairly certain that by 1810 it has entirely disappeared." Aloysius A. Lightbound to the writer, Liverpool, June 9, 1955.

⁵³ "Recollections of the Jesuits," *United States Catholic Miscellany*, December 12, 1829.

⁵⁴ A letter from H. Chadwick, S.J., Archivist of Stonyhurst College, to the writer, March 3, 1955, stated: "If there are any letters of Archb. Whitfield here in our archives I don't know of them and have never seen any. I can only tell you of a reference to his 'quitting' Hodder novitiate in 'June 1813' and being then sent on 'mission'. I can find no note of his entering Hodder nor of the mission to which he went." The year given here does not coincide with the information given in Whitfield's letter to Maréchal, October 24, 1812, where he stated he had already been at the novitiate, and another of February 24, 1813, which repeated the same. The information given by Father Chadwick would seem, therefore, to be in error.

⁵⁵ AAB, 21-I-1, Whitfield to Maréchal, October 24, 1812.

⁵⁶ Pius VII, May 21, 1803, had approved, *viva voce*, a request English ex-Jesuits for affiliation with the still recognized Jesuits of Russia. Martin P. Harney, *The Jesuits in History* (New York, 1941), p. 78.

Stefano Cardinal Borgia, that the restoration had not been authorized and the bishops were, therefore, forbidden to recognize them.⁵⁷ The ex-novice remarked to his friend that the bishops were opposed to the Society in general and were refusing faculties to Jesuit priests.

The second reason Whitfield gave for his withdrawal from the Jesuit novitiate was the vow of poverty, which, he stated, would have become for him "an origin of perpetual doubts & scruples." Since he had a sizable amount of money and some valuable property, the vow of poverty was a real problem for him. Moreover, he said he could not reconcile the concept of poverty as he had learned it from the rule of St. Ignatius with the manner of living on the missions. Finally, his health, which he described as weak and impaired, would not permit him to fulfill the regular duties of a Jesuit.

Stone, the superior at Stonyhurst, therefore, gave him leave, especially in view of the circumstances of the Society in England—with the pope approving, Propaganda disapproving, and with the bishops somewhat hostile. The Jesuits continued, nevertheless, to operate their school and novitiate as well as to staff their missions as best they could.⁵⁸ Whitfield maintained some association with the Society in being assigned to St. Mary's Chapel, at Little Crosby near Liverpool. After the general restoration of the Society in 1814 and another invitation to join it he remarked, "Last year I feared that a vow of poverty would embarrass my conscience, living on the mission as missionaries live in England, so I did not enter."⁵⁹ Stone had entreated him to return, and in the following year offered to take Whitfield into the Society and send him to Liege upon its reestablishment.⁶⁰ By this time, however, America was beckoning.

One of the main reasons for the opposition to the Society of Jesus in England was the fear of some Catholics that it would delay the grant of emancipation.⁶¹ Whitfield was aware of the persistence of the old prejudice against the Jesuits: "Mention has

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 359.

⁵⁸ AAB, 21-I-1, Whitfield to Maréchal, October 24, 1812.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 21-I-3, Same to Same, June 22, 1815.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 21-H-4, Same to Same, August 20, 1816.

⁶¹ Harney, *Jesuits*, p. 393.

been repeatedly made in Parliament of the danger of such a society existing—But it is hoped Ministers will have the good sense not to listen to their calumniators—The Bishops (excepting Bp Milner) do not seem to patronize them—”⁶² Calumnies and ecclesiastical opposition were not the only obstacles preventing the spread of the Jesuits. There was also a serious shortage of men and resources: “Most of the fathers had to labor in lonely, scattered missions, amidst poverty and discouragements; practically, they were foreign missionaries in their own land. The most they could hope to accomplish was to keep the Faith alive in their isolated flocks.”⁶³ It was one of these isolated flocks that became Whitfield’s charge at Little Crosby, a spot which he characterized as “a very agreeable place.”⁶⁴

Catholic life in the small congregation gave evidence of new freedom during his ministry.⁶⁵ His flock consisted of about 300 souls,⁶⁶ about whom their shepherd remarked, “I like my congregation very well, they are a set of good honest farmers & labourers, not one manufacturer among us & their morals are the better for it.”⁶⁷ Two exceptions were noted in comments: “the Gentleman who owns the chapel & who lives at the Hall about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from my house,”⁶⁸ and “the only thing that gives pain, is the Squire.”⁶⁹ As usual Whitfield omitted names, but one can at least guess that the “gentleman” was a descendant of the cavalier, William Blundell, who died in 1698 after suffering five imprisonments for the faith. The “squire” was evidently troublesome in

⁶² AAB, 21-I-3, Whitfield to Maréchal, June 22, 1815.

⁶³ Harney, *Jesuits*, p. 393.

⁶⁴ AAB, 21-I-1, Whitfield to Maréchal, October 24, 1812.

⁶⁵ All that is given here in regard to Whitfield’s ministry at Little Crosby is taken from his letters to Maréchal. Inquiries made by the writer at Little Crosby itself yielded almost nothing. Abbot Lightbound in the letter already cited stated: “I have pursued the enquiries from Crosby and there is nothing to be learnt from there beyond the fact that James Whitfield was the priest there for a few years which you already know.” Michael Gaine, secretary to the Archbishop of Liverpool, wrote on April 27, 1955: “We have made enquiries too at St. Mary’s, Little Crosby, and neither the records of the Catholic church there nor of the local family landowners (the Blundells) could help. Any other enquiries that we have made have also proved fruitless.”

⁶⁶ AAB, 21-I-1, Whitfield to Maréchal, October 24, 1812.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 21-I-2, Same to Same, February 24, 1813.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 21-I-1.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 21-I-2.

regard to setting the hours of service;⁷⁰ yet he and the missionary at the chapel seemed to be on good terms. Whitfield complimented the irksome squire and his wife, when he wrote, "though he & his Lady are young, yet they are regular in their duties, & of late both come to Mass every day."⁷¹

Indicative of the Catholic tone of the surrounding township, Whitfield described his parish as having "two very entire stone crosses standing;" there was another chapel nearby with 300 communicants and, "the inhabitants are all catholicks, who have likewise a fine cross standing;" there were within a four-mile radius five Catholic chapels with some 1,500 more parishioners; "and throughout the county of Lancashire it is nearly the same, it is indeed called God's country on account of the great number of its inhabitants who have preserved their faith."⁷²

Liverpool had at this time, according to Whitfield, about 15,000 Catholics with as many in Manchester. There were four chapels in operation in the city and the future Pro-Cathedral of St. Nicholas was under construction. When this church was completed the missionary of Little Crosby sent his set of fine gold vestments for the ceremony of dedication performed on August 17, 1815, by William Gibson, the Vicar Apostolic of the Northern District, who was assisted by his coadjutor, Thomas Smith.⁷³ Whitfield reported that the major of Liverpool and many Protestants were in attendance at the opening of "the largest chapel the catholicks have in England."⁷⁴ As a reward, the missionary at Little Crosby was able to delight his flock by celebrating High Mass "with musick & the singers from Liverpool—a thing never before seen at Crosby."⁷⁵

After reading Whitfield's description of his residence, one can understand why he would have had some scruples about the Jesuit vow of poverty, although, as mentioned above, this was not the usual lot of the missionary. He had a comfortable house overlooking the sea, giving him a view of the ships going to and from

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 21-I-3, Whitfield to Maréchal, June 22, 1815.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*, 21-I-1.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 21-I-4, Whitfield to Maréchal, December 21, 1815.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 21-I-1.

Liverpool as well as of the port itself. Besides an income of about £140 annually, he had, "an excellent garden well stocked with pears, apples, plumbs, & even peaches, & I have land enough to keep an horse & two cows."⁷⁶

During these years he had also the acquaintance of Thomas Weld, whose confession Whitfield heard on a visit to Crosby;⁷⁷ Robert Gradwell, who was on the mission at Cloughton not far from St. Mary's Chapel, a priest with whom he would have future dealings at the English College in Rome; and Thomas Penswick, who was at St. Nicholas in Liverpool at the time. It was a group destined for distinction: a cardinal, an archbishop, and two bishops. Gradwell has left the only testimony concerning Whitfield's ministry at Little Crosby when he endorsed Maréchal's request for a coadjutor in 1827: a discreet man, prudent and capable; a pious, gifted, and eloquent priest; an active and indefatigable missionary, yet moderate and gentle in manner, and free of factional spirit.⁷⁸

One of the vexing problems still remaining for English Catholics, besides the question of emancipation, may be learned from Whitfield's comments on marriage difficulties. Catholics were required to appear before a Protestant minister for a marriage ceremony in order to have their children legitimate in the eyes of law. This minister used the Anglican ritual. Bishop Challoner had permitted Catholics to go through the ceremony, considering it as a purely civil affair. The missionary at Crosby solved it in the following manner:

The best way seems to be this, to marry the catholic parties and give them no advice as to going to the protestant church or not. Indeed they will not ask it, but go. What fault they commit perhaps their ignorance will excuse, especially as they do not intend to join the parson in prayer, but only to do what the law ordains to render their marriage valid, & their children legitimate according to the law of the land.⁷⁹

Considering the circumstances, it would appear to have been a

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Archives of the English College, Rome, Whitfield to Nicholas Wiseman, June 9, 1831.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ AAB, 21-H-3, Whitfield to Maréchal, June 4, 1816.

sound solution, but one which by no means lessened "one of the greatest grievances to be born by the English catholics."⁸⁰

A major preoccupation during these years was the thought of rejoining his professor-friend, Ambrose Maréchal, who had once again returned to the United States. In October 1812, he received a letter from Maréchal while on a visit to Stonyhurst, and the deep friendship was kindled again with Whitfield's reply:

Thanks to the Almighty that you are safe in America, I hope you are gone there to procure him glory from thousands of souls. How happy should I be to live & die in your company if it were the will of God. But private inclinations must give way to his divine appointment. If ever I should know it to be his will that I should labour under your direction in America, I would immediately fly to your embrace. Pray to God that I may know & do his will.⁸¹

Attachment to his former professor deepened as time passed. The early death of his own father, years of companionship with his widowed mother, and his recent failure as a novice for the Society of Jesus may have accounted for this seeming dependence on Maréchal. The Sulpician was but six years older than his former student, making understanding less difficult and their friendship more compatible. It was from St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore that Whitfield received Maréchal's letter "with inexpressible pleasure."⁸²

James Whitfield was a faithful alumnus of St. Irenaeus at Lyons and he recalled the lasting impressions made upon him there:

for I take a particular interest in all that regards the Sulpicians. I wish I had the happiness of being worthy to join them. The more I reflect on the good example, good order, etc., at St. Irenée, the more I esteem your venerable body, & reproach myself for not having more profited by the abundant graces that Heaven poured on that Seminary—. . . I strive to follow the rules of the seminary, & I think myself fortunate in having brought with me that *examen particulier* in 2 vol. of the Sulpicians.⁸³

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 21-I-1, October 24, 1812.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

This attachment for the Sulpicians remained with the man all his life. To rejoin them in America was now his great desire: "And yet though I be very happy and comfortable if it were for promoting the greater glory of God & providence should point out I would leave all to follow your traces."⁸⁴

A number of obstacles would have to be removed before he could go to the United States. First, England and the United States were at war from June 1812, to December 1814. His health was not good, and, moreover, there was the question of the obligation he was under by reason of having been ordained for the missions. England had a scarcity of priests—his local bishop, William Gibson, would not readily grant his request and since he was in a Jesuit mission, Whitfield would seem to have some obligation toward the Society.

The Treaty of Ghent removed one obstacle from Whitfield's path to the United States. The question of his health, however, remained as it would until his death. In February 1813: "My health is not very good my windy complaint having increased, & a catholick doctor I consulted told me he thought a change to the climate of America would not answer, on account of the great heat of your summer."⁸⁵ Three years later Whitfield's condition seemed unchanged: "The climate of America will not perhaps agree with my constitution, which is none of the strongest, as I have a weak stomach, & subject to wind, but neither does this climate which is very damp & contrary I think to this complaint, as in dry weather and clear air I am always very well." But he was determined not to allow poor health to deflect him from his goal: "However I care little about long life, so I live & die well which I hope I shall in your company. Dr. Macartney one of the first doctors of Liverpool says he is sure America would not suit me at my age &c, but I know Doctors are often deceived—& I am as well this year as I have been since I came to England."⁸⁶

Another personal obstacle was the matter of the interpretation of the phrase, "*sacris Missionibus inserviendi*," contained in the

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 21-I-2, Whitfield to Maréchal.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 21-H-4, Same to Same, August 20, 1816.

dispensation from dimissorial letters granted him by Pius VII in 1808. The question actually resolved itself into what "missions" were intended by the Holy Father in granting the dispensation. The need of Whitfield's bishop was mentioned among the reasons for granting that dispensation, although this was not specifically stated in the formula of dispensation. Upon his arrival in England, Whitfield had immediately associated himself with the Society of Jesus, and the Vicar Apostolic of the Northern District had not pressed him on the question, as was evident from his correspondence with Maréchal during his years at Little Crosby. In March 1815, he wrote:

I am still, as you see, in the same situation nor have I taken, as yet, any further engagements with the gentlemen of Stonyhurst. . . . I recommend myself most earnestly to your prayers that I may obtain light & grace always to do God's will, either by staying here or going wheresoever Providence shall appoint. Thanks to God my health is tolerably good, and we lead a quiet and peaceable life in our parts.⁸⁷

Meanwhile Ambrose Maréchal had already been recommended to the Holy See for the episcopal vacancy at New York, and had refused to accept the burden. Again on July 3, 1816, he was nominated to fill the Diocese of Philadelphia, but persisted in refusal. Whitfield received the news with pleasure and stated:

May it take place if it be, as I trust it will, for God's glory & your greater merit. I hope therefore your memorial will have no other effect than to draw greater graces from above to support your charge, & not to receive an exemption from the court of Rome.⁸⁸

Actually Lorenzo Cardinal Litta, Prefect of Propaganda, did not insist and Maréchal remained free, although he must have expected the worst, for he urged Whitfield to come to America in the event of his consecration.⁸⁹ The latter replied:

It would give me great consolation to be near you, in order to be directed in the labours & enlightened in the difficulties of a mission. I foresee, indeed, that I would have an [life] & as to temporals what is called a comfortable situation for

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 21-H-2.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 21-H-3.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

a more laborious & less comfortable one. But if the latter be more pleasing to God, if I can save my soul in it, any sacrifice of ease & plenty to be made, would cost me little or nothing. Besides these temporal blessings are not enjoyed without danger & trouble. Your company, advice & direction would give greater peace to my soul than all the good things of Crosby. What I desire if I come to America, is to labour under your direction as far as by backward learning & poor abilities will suffice, & to save my soul (which was the principal end I had in view in leaving the world) in humble subjection & obedience. If therefore it be God's will you should be my guide to Heaven, I hope there will be no insurmountable obstacle in my way to you.⁹⁰

The next year would resolve the difficulties and the two friends would once again be reunited.

Whitfield's association with the Society of Jesus caused little or no trouble, since he had not bound himself to it in any manner. He was not unaware of the society's needs, for there were many missions without priests. But America and Maréchal were in need too. In this same year, 1816, all doubts were dispelled with regard to the *titulo missionis* vow at ordination time. Maréchal wrote that he was not bound to the English missions, confirming Whitfield's own opinion, and another priest at a neighboring chapel, who had studied in Rome, stated that the Propaganda generally understood the "title of mission" to be very broad and not confined to any specific area, except that it be "in partibus infidelium."⁹¹ Moreover, there is no evidence to indicate that Bishop Gibson or his coadjutor, Thomas Smith, placed any obstacles in Whitfield's path. Thus Little Crosby was soon to be without a pastor.

In June 1816 Whitfield began to make preparations to sail for the United States. Before this, however, he offered to make a trip through France to purchase books and religious articles for his friend.⁹² While in Leghorn he had purchased two paintings to be used as altar pieces and these he offered to send to Philadelphia in the event of his friend's being named bishop of that see. These works, according to their owner, were "but copies &

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 21-H-3 and 21-H-4.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 21-H-3, Whitfield to Maréchal, June 4, 1816.

not judged by connoisseurs to be very good."⁹³ The main item of the former merchant's property was the £2500 in the hands of the Filicchi at Leghorn, about which he said, "I hope God will allow me to consecrate it, some time, to the service, in the place & manner he shall please."⁹⁴ A hope later fulfilled in the days of his episcopacy.

Having made the decision to join Maréchal, Whitfield wrote him in January 1817:

If this be God's will, there will be either no obstacles, or at least none but what will be removed. I hope my intention is pure & notwithstanding all my imperfections, my sole view is God's glory & the good of my soul. It strikes me that your example & advice would make salutary impressions upon my poor soul. . . . As to the hard labour I may expect in America, without those emoluments & conveniences our english missions enjoy, I care little or nothing. If I sought for temporal comforts, I certainly should not leave Crosby where I have but too great an abundance. So do not think I am terrified at changing ease for labour or an agreeable situation for one that is unknown. It seems to be that if you were labouring on the coast of Guinea among the Blacks & were to call me to your assistance I should be ready to go & join you.⁹⁵

By July of that year nothing could hold him any longer at Little Crosby—he would stake all his claims in the United States at the side of Maréchal, who was soon to become the third Archbishop of Baltimore after the death of Leonard Neale, which had already occurred on June 18. On July 15, Whitfield happily announced his forthcoming voyage on the ship, "Franklin Captain Graham," which would sail on the 17th of the coming August.⁹⁶ He made out a will in which he bequeathed to Maréchal all that he possessed: some 11,000 Leghorn dollars in gold with the Filicchi brothers, plus some 200 doubloons⁹⁷ he had with

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 21-H-4.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 21-I-3.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 21-I-5.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 21-H-6.

⁹⁷ The Leghorn dollar was also called *scudo* in Italian and equalled the American dollar as well as the Spanish *escudo* and the French *écu*. The doubloon or doblon was worth double the aforementioned coins. William C. Carew, *The Coinage of the European Continent* (New York, 1893), pp. 195-199.

him, and nine packages of other property including the vestments purchased at Lyons. In the company of Joseph W. Fairclough, a student from Stonyhurst, Whitfield left his native land bound for the new world. The only evidence of the date of his arrival is a statement in the death notice published by the *Baltimore Gazette* of October 20, 1834, placing it on September 8, 1817.

Fortunately for the young Englishman, Ambrose Maréchal was at hand to provide the mature guidance as well as the necessary companionship to his former seminarian, who was literally alone in a new world. The archbishop-elect had immediate need for a loyal assistant during the autumn days of preparation for his consecration, a need that would increase as the troubled years of his episcopacy unfolded. Maréchal's outstanding qualities had been recognized by three bishops, all of whom had wished him either as their own successor or as the bishop of one of the other American sees. Richard Concanen, O.P., not long before his death which occurred before he could reach New York as its first bishop, had recommended the Sulpician to the Holy See as his coadjutor in 1810. Likewise John Carroll, shortly before his own death on December 3, 1815, had requested bulls which arrived from Rome early in 1816, appointing Maréchal to the troubled See of Philadelphia, a post he had declined. Finally, the venerable Bishop of Boston, Jean de Cheverus, had suggested Maréchal to the enfeebled Leonard Neale as a worthy candidate for the latter's successor as Archbishop of Baltimore. The bulls which appointed Maréchal as coadjutor with the right of succession to Neale had arrived in Baltimore on November 10, 1817. As administrator, however, he was, by virtue of Neale's death the previous June, already in temporary possession of the jurisdiction, a fact that explains the presence of James Whitfield at the Pro-Cathedral of St. Peter at that time.⁹⁸ On November 15 Whitfield wrote from New York informing the archbishop-elect that John Connolly, Bishop of New York, would accompany Cheverus to the consecration in Baltimore.⁹⁹ He may have been

⁹⁸ He made an entry in the baptismal register of St. Peter's (now in the Archives of the Archdiocese of Baltimore) for the first time on November 13, 1817, p. 391.

⁹⁹ AAB, 21-H-7.

in New York at the time in order to invite Connolly to Maréchal's consecration, or, more likely, the money left with the Filicchi brothers in Leghorn as well as two paintings had arrived at New York.

Whitfield's regular pastoral work in his new homeland began on January 12, 1818.¹⁰⁰ Within the next two weeks the sympathy of his youthful days in Liverpool would have again been aroused as he officiated at the marriage ceremony, his first in America, of a Negro slave couple on January 24.¹⁰¹ Had he been confined, however, to the limits of the cathedral parish many precious opportunities to obtain firsthand information and experience of American Catholicism would have been lost. As the almost inseparable companion of the Archbishop of Baltimore, living in the same house and traveling with him on episcopal visitations, the young curate gained valuable knowledge and impressions without which it would have been much more difficult for him in his role of successor to Maréchal. The archbishop's first visitation tour began on March 31, 1818, when he was accompanied by his confidant.¹⁰² Their first stop was at the Georgetown Visitation Convent, where they were received with great respect and attention.¹⁰³ The community was in its first canonical year as a house of the Sisters of the Visitation, Archbishop Neale having accepted the first vows of the foundress, Mother Teresa Lalor, along with two other women on December 28 of the previous year. In his report to the Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith in October 1818, Archbishop Maréchal bestowed high praise upon the Visitation Convent and stated that it already had fifty nuns, a worthy testimony of its nascent vigor. Some years later Whitfield concurred in his friend's opinion when he became one of its benefactors as well as the community's strong support during a period of crisis which was to occur during his administration as archbishop.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ AAB, Baptismal Register, St. Peter's Church, Baltimore, p. 398.

¹⁰¹ AAB, Marriage Register, 1814-1827, Volume II, St. Peter's Church, Baltimore, p. 64. A year later he officiated at another wedding of a slave couple. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

¹⁰² "Diary of Ambrose Maréchal for 1818," *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia*, XI (1900), 417.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ "Il a été remplacé par Mgr James Whitfield, un de nos généreux

The episcopal visitor and his English companion stopped at Georgetown College of the Society of Jesus where both had the opportunity of renewing friendly relationships. Maréchal had spent most of his first American sojourn with the Jesuit Fathers, especially at Bohemia Manor where Robert Beeston, S.J., had helped him to learn English, and at the college itself, where he taught philosophy during the 1801-02 term; and Whitfield was an ex-Jesuit novice. Although future relations with the Jesuits would be seriously strained, the Archbishop of Baltimore held the Society in esteem, as was evidenced in his report to Propaganda.¹⁰⁵ He lamented some the fact that the Jesuit superiors at Rome would not send six or eight more men of notable learning and piety to help in the promotion of the Georgetown school: in no other part of the Catholic world could the Society exist more securely, be propagated more widely, and produce fruit more abundantly.¹⁰⁶ Neither Maréchal nor Whitfield could overlook the contribution of the Jesuits in the Maryland area.

During the balance of April and May the visitors continued through the parishes and missions of Washington, Alexandria, Port Tobacco, St. Thomas Manor, and others in southern Maryland. At Port Tobacco they interviewed the struggling community of Carmelite nuns, who had come to the United States at the request of Father Charles Neale in 1790, and whose interest Whitfield was to keep in mind for many years to come. The pair returned to Baltimore on May 18.

If the first tour had been characterized by pleasant associations and encouraging progress, the next, to Norfolk, Virginia, in June

bienfaiteurs. Ce vénérable archeveque, qui daigna, au temps de notre plus grande détresse, nous secourir avec une libéralité dont nous conserverons toujours le reconnoissant souvenir, veut bien continuer à nous honorer des ses bontés." Soeur Elisabeth-Juliana Matthews, *Lettre de Notre Monastère de la Visitation de Georgetown . . . ce 8 septembre 1828* (Paris, 1828). This was a circular sent to all the Visitation convents in Europe. An old cash book in the Archives of the Sisters of the Visitation, Georgetown, listed the following contributions made by Whitfield: November 23, 1823, \$100.00; May 13, 1825, \$50.00; and March 28, 1831, \$5.00.

¹⁰⁵ This was the account of the status of the Archdiocese of Baltimore sent to the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide, October 16, 1818. An edition of this report may be found in the *Catholic Historical Review*, I (January 1916), 439-453. In what follows this edition and the page numbers cited will be those of the *CHR*.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 442.

of the same year would bring the full story of the evils of trusteeism before the eyes of the young priest. On June 11 Maréchal, again accompanied by Whitfield, left Baltimore by steamboat for Norfolk where they arrived the next day.¹⁰⁷ Maréchal's predecessors, Carroll and Neale, had left him a thorny legacy in the vexatious problem of trusteeism. Archbishop Carroll had lived to regret the fact that he had miscalculated the American temperament in permitting laymen to administer, even to own, the temporalities of the Church. During the short administration of Leonard Neale, the Catholic communities at Charleston and Norfolk had lapsed into schism.¹⁰⁸ By the time that the third Archbishop of Baltimore arrived on his first official visitation the trouble was already three years old. The Reverend James Lucas, who had been ousted by the rebellious trustees, had established a temporary chapel for the faithful portion of his congregation. Maréchal confirmed eighty souls there, a fact which spoke well for Father Lucas' zeal under trying circumstances. Although the archbishop had armed him with a letter permitting him to excommunicate the recalcitrant, the ousted French priest was cautioned to move slowly. This same forbearance was exercised toward the Charleston schismatic priests, Simon Felix Gallagher and Robert Browne, O.S.A.

At the time of the visit to Norfolk in 1818 the trustees in both cities were at the point of uniting their respective causes in Thomas Carbry, O.P., an Irish-born friar in the favor of Bishop Connolly of New York and his own superiors in Rome. In the meantime Maréchal had restored the censures, originally imposed by Archbishop Neale, against Gallagher and Browne, who, instead of submitting gracefully, had resorted to defiant and self-justifying letters. Eventually lay trustees took matters into their own hands by sending a petition to the Holy See in May 1818, for a new diocese in the southern states with the recommendation that Carbry should be made its first bishop. In this nomina-

¹⁰⁷ "Diary of Maréchal," p. 426.

¹⁰⁸ For the following treatment of the two schisms I have drawn heavily on: Peter Guilday, *Life and Times of John England* (New York, 1927) and Sister M. Bernetta Brislen, "The Episcopacy of Leonard Neale, Second Archbishop of Baltimore," *Historical Records and Studies*, XXXIV (1945), 20-111.

tion they joined with the Norfolk trustees on a common front. The Archbishop of Baltimore, however, had already recommended a new division for the Carolinas and Georgia. An Irish vs. French controversy, was, therefore, in full force when Maréchal and Whitfield appeared at Norfolk in the early summer.

And yet the Virginia sojourn was not without some bright spots. President Monroe was making his second official tour of the United States at this time; and while in Norfolk the Archbishop of Baltimore accepted an invitation to dine with the President.¹⁰⁹ The latter had come to Norfolk on June 7 to inspect this important seaport entrance to Chesapeake Bay¹¹⁰ and remained approximately ten days, during which time there were undoubtedly a number of public receptions or dinners attended by local dignitaries and distinguished visitors. Archbishop Maréchal, as the leading Catholic prelate of the land, would have been included among the latter.

The first round of episcopal visitations came to an end with return to Baltimore on June 22.¹¹¹ In September Whitfield again accompanied the archbishop on a visitation to such places as Emmitsburg, Frederick, and Rockville; and it was noted that he preached at St. Mary's Church in Rockville on September 6.¹¹² For the second time that year Archbishop Maréchal and his companion dined with one of the notable political figures of the day, the former Governor of Maryland, Thomas Sim Lee, who was now living in retirement at his Needwood estate in Frederick County. Indeed, Father Whitfield borrowed one of the governor's horses.¹¹³ Association with men of the calibre of Monroe and Lee helped to give the future Archbishop of Baltimore a taste of American society at its highest level.

Archbishop Maréchal concluded his first year of inspection with a tour during the month of October of the eastern shore of Maryland. He then prepared a lengthy report on the status of

¹⁰⁹ "Diary of Maréchal," p. 426.

¹¹⁰ Samuel Putnam Waldo, *The Tour of James Monroe, President of the United States, through the Northern and Eastern States, in 1817; his Tour in the Year 1818* (Hartford, 1819), pp. 321, 326, 331.

¹¹¹ "Diary of Maréchal," p. 427.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 429.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 431.

diocesan affairs for Propaganda.¹¹⁴ He asserted that there was no place on earth where the Catholic religion could be more promptly or widely disseminated, or exist more securely, than in the United States, where all enjoyed religious freedom and tolerance. Numerically, the Church was increasing through large numbers of Catholic immigrants and conversions from Protestantism; and territorially there was room for tremendous expansion. Such optimism carried over to the days of his friend Whitfield.

According to the archbishop's report, however, the advancement of the American Church had several hindrances: too few missionaries and too little money to educate others, and schisms resulting from the American spirit of independence and liberty. Maréchal had in mind, in the latter regard, the condition of the Church at Norfolk and Charleston. Recalling the accusations that had been made against him as being anti-Irish—a charge which would be levelled against his successor as well—he sought to explain his position to Propaganda: he had already given faculties to eleven Irish priests, and the majority of his seminarians at St. Mary's were Irish. His Irish opponents could not fairly overlook such concrete evidence, nor his general esteem for those Irish priests, who were true to their priesthood: "The Irish who act in the spirit of God and who are imbued with truly ecclesiastical ways serve for the good of religion. They are prompt to work, of no mediocre eloquence, outstanding in zeal for souls. I rejoice exceedingly that there are many of this type in my diocese; and I certainly would receive many more of their kind with open arms."¹¹⁵ But he then pointed out the sad record of a number of Irish priests who had been the source of considerable disturbance; and he noted that the lamentable troubles of Charleston, Norfolk, or Philadelphia had had their origin with Irish priests who were intemperate and ambitious. In the succeeding years the intensity of the Irish-French conflict increased to such a point, however, that Whitfield eventually could not share the

¹¹⁴ See n. 105 above.

¹¹⁵ "Hiberni qui spiritu Dei aguntur, et moribus vere ecclesiasticis sunt imbuti, religioni feliciter serviunt. Sunt enim prompti ad laborem, non mediocriter eloquentes, zelo animarum praestantissimi. Laetor valde quidem quod plurimi sunt huiusce generis in mea diocesi; atque certe multos eis similes ambabus ulnis ultro reciperem." Maréchal to Propaganda, October 16, 1818, *CHR*, I, 445.

balanced view of his predecessor expressed at this time toward the Irish.

Although Maréchal had sent two Jesuits of Irish extraction to Charleston with the hope that they would be able to bring about a settlement of the schism, out of his reflection on the Irish-French controversy, he had reached the conclusion that English priests would be the best for the United States, especially for the new diocese in the Carolinas.¹¹⁶ Propaganda, however, would seem to have been unimpressed by this considered viewpoint since for a time it continued to appoint Irish bishops to new American sees. In June 1818 the Holy See granted Maréchal's request for a new diocese at Charleston. A year later Cardinal Fontana, Prefect of Propaganda, informed the Baltimore prelate of a prospective diocese for Virginia as well. The latter was seriously objectionable to Maréchal: there were too few Catholics in the area, and these could be attended easily enough from Baltimore. Moreover, this action would needlessly divide the diocese geographically.¹¹⁷ The same view was later shared by Whitfield in the days of his own episcopal administration. But in the end events occurring in the schismatic communities, as well as the interference of Irish bishops, militated against the fulfillment of the archbishop's wishes. Bishop John Connolly of New York added to the difficulties by favoring unruly priests in the Archdiocese of Baltimore; while prelates in Ireland had the ear of Propaganda for promoting Irish interests. Nor did lengthy delays help matters. Although Maréchal was consecrated in December 1817, it was only on December 19, 1819, that he received the pallium.

Eventually the Irish won the victory. In January 1820, Henry Conwell, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Armagh, already seventy-four years old, was named the second Bishop of Philadelphia and was destined to be the center of agitation of one of the thorniest problems that Whitfield had to face as archbishop. Propaganda also decided to end the difficulties in the Carolinas and Virginia by establishing new dioceses, and on July 11, 1820,

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 445, 451.

¹¹⁷ The diocese would by the division consist of Maryland and the District of Columbia and the distant states of Alabama and Mississippi.

Charleston was erected, with the Irish-born John England as its first bishop, and a new see was established for Richmond, with Patrick Kelly of Ossory as the new bishop. In all of this the Archbishop of Baltimore had not been consulted, nor were his views on the impracticality of a diocese for Virginia heeded.

Upon his arrival in November 1820, Bishop Kelly brought a number of letters from Propaganda for the Catholics of Charleston and Norfolk as well as a communication for Archbishop Maréchal. In the Roman documents the laymen were cautioned on points of unity and obedience, while the Baltimore prelate was assured of the respect felt for his sincerity, although the curial officials maintained their difference of opinion regarding the new Diocese of Richmond. In October the archbishop had complained openly to Propaganda of its favoritism toward Irish priests. It is not surprising, therefore, that when Kelly appeared in Baltimore Maréchal made a formal protest, stating that the suffragan bishop would be taking over against the metropolitan's wishes. Scarcely had Bishop Kelly settled in Norfolk, where he remained until his transfer back to Ireland two years later, than he gave his favor to the rebels, both clerical and lay. The chapel of Father Lucas was placed under interdict; and confusion more confounded reigned for months thereafter. Eventually Archbishop Maréchal decided, in October 1821, that he had but one recourse, to plead his cause personally in Rome.

In the previous August news from Rome reported that the promotion of the Irish bishops to American sees had come about through Cardinal della Somaglia, who favored his own Dominicans; and that the appointments had been made by him in the absence of Cardinal Fontana.¹¹⁸ Maréchal obtained a favorable hearing upon his visit to Rome and a decision that Richmond would be returned to the jurisdiction of Baltimore and that Bishop Kelly would be transferred elsewhere. The fulfillment of this

¹¹⁸ An entry in the journal of the Reverend Louis Deluol, S.S., on August 23, 1821, reads in part: ". . . la promotion des derniers évêques irlandais envoyés en Amérique avait été faite par le Cardinal Della Somaglia pendant la maladie du Cardinal Fontana, que le Cardinal Della Somaglia est *Quick* que dans son propre convent des Dominicains . . ." The original manuscript of this diary is in the Archives of St. Sulpice in Paris, but there is also a manuscript copy in the Archives of St. Mary's Seminary, Roland Park, Baltimore.

promise occurred on January 28, 1822, when Kelly was named to the See of Waterford in Ireland. In a letter to his archbishop in Rome, Whitfield remarked:

We received likewise the truly respectful letter to you of Cardl. Fontana, restoring Virginia to Baltimore when a vacancy offers a removal for Dr. Kelly. We have kept this a profound secret. But it seems Dr. Kelly has not, for in a newspaper it was announced that he was going to leave Norfolk for another see, we have not seen the paper, but it is said the see was in Ireland.¹¹⁹

Meanwhile Bishop England was governing the Diocese of Charleston and Maréchal could at last turn his thoughts to his own jurisdiction. A year later he was able happily to inform Robert Gradwell, his Roman agent, that the diocese was now at peace.¹²⁰

Through his association with the archbishop in this trying problem Whitfield acquired a thorough distaste for Irish interference as well as a complete dislike for the system of trusteeism. And yet during this period there is no evidence that either Maréchal or Whitfield held the Irish under any general condemnation. They associated with many Irish priests and the annual Mass in honor of St. Patrick continued to be celebrated in Baltimore with particular splendor. In fact, Father Whitfield preached at this Mass on March 17, 1821, at the very peak of the Irish problem!¹²¹

During this same period of his administration Maréchal was also burdened with the task of completing the cathedral and obtaining the funds necessary to finance the construction. May 31, 1821, was, therefore, undoubtedly one of the happiest days of his life, when he dedicated the Cathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Bishops Conwell and Cheverus assisted him, and the festive sermon was preached by Roger Baxter of the Society of Jesus. The choice of an Irish bishop and a Jesuit preacher would indicate the breadth of view of the Archbishop of Baltimore, who had been experiencing serious difficulties with the Irish and the Jesuits. Whitfield seems to have had no significant

¹¹⁹ AAB, 21-I-6, February 21, 1822.

¹²⁰ Baltimore, January 4, 1823. Thomas Hughes, S.J., *The History of the Society of Jesus in North America*, p. 503.

¹²¹ Deluol, March 17, 1821.

part in the dedication ceremonies, although he did have the honor of becoming the cathedral's first rector;¹²² and later as archbishop he saw the portico and the twin towers completed.

But the joys of that May day were costly. Construction thus far had increased the archbishop's debts, there was much building yet to come, and the interior remained for some time unadorned.* The financial plight of Maréchal was reflected in a letter of Whitfield, rector of the cathedral, to his archbishop in Rome nine months later:

We have duly received the five large boxes from Paris containing the four statues & the brass crucifix. The five boxes from Marseilles contd the baptismal fonts & the Holy water pots, are now on their way from N. York, we expect them daily. Nothing has been opened. The freight of the former amounted to about 90 dollars & the whole of the charges to \$202— The five boxes from Marseilles I got valued in N. York very low the freight & duty only amounted to \$30— The Trustees have paid these charges but with *mauvaise grace*, I am afraid though they said little. They want money, & money they would thank you for, they wish for that, & almost that alone. But I hope your Grace will go on in adorning your Cathedral unmindful of the calculations of storekeepers. True indeed the times are very bad, & they have been alarmed for the money they have advanced, they wanted to disburthen themselves of the loans standing in their names at the different Banks & have obtained a law at Annapolis to create a transferable funded stock to the amount of 50,000 dollars, this a month ago, & yet no one comes forward to lend the money, & it is probable no one will— An idea this moment strikes me, & were it not chimerical could you get 30 to 40000 dollars to pay off the remainder of the debt of the Cathedral, it might be truly yours without trusteeship. I think the Congregation & the Trustees would be glad to cede all their pretended rights for such an offer.¹²³

According to available records there were no serious difficulties resulting from the strained financial relationships with the trustees and in the above letter Whitfield stated: "We go on as usual in great peace & harmony between Mr. Smith & self, & with the

¹²² Whitfield administered the first baptism in the new cathedral on July 8, 1821. Michael J. Riordan, *Catholic Records from the Beginning of Catholicity in Baltimore to the Present Time* (Baltimore, c. 1906), p. 108.

¹²³ AAB, 21-I-6.

congregation with the exception of some few weak headed babblers of the female school of the late Revd Pastor. Though I believe there is little said even by them."¹²⁴

This, however, was unfortunately not the case in relationship with the Society of Jesus and its subsidy to the Archbishop of Baltimore, which resulted ultimately in bitter controversy between the two parties. In June 1818 Maréchal made claim upon the Maryland Jesuits for restoration of a subsidy paid to his two predecessors by the group known as the "Corporation of the Roman Catholic Clergy." This organization had been an outgrowth of the days of suppression when the Jesuits of America incorporated their properties in order to preserve them with a view to the restoration of their order. Archbishops Carroll and Neale had received financial support from this corporation of which they were both members and beneficiaries. The third Archbishop of Baltimore, thinking that this was a right which had accrued to his see, attempted to have it restored. One of the reasons for his appeal was attributed to the cathedral building expenses. In view of Maréchal's action the Jesuits voted to grant him the annual sum of \$560 for three years as a donation toward the cathedral project. When this subsidy ceased Maréchal insisted in April 1820 that he had a right in justice to continued support and threatened litigation, a threat which he carried out with a first appeal to the Holy See in August of that year. The result was a long controversy which lasted until its final resolution in 1838 during the archiepiscopal administration of Samuel Eccleston, the fifth Archbishop of Baltimore. When this conflict heaped another burden upon the rising mountain of trouble in the archbishop's mind a trip to Rome was decided upon in the fall of 1821 to settle the problems of jurisdiction, trusteeism, new dioceses, and the Jesuit controversy. During his absence of almost a year, James Whitfield governed the archdiocese.

The Roman sojourn ended with considerable success. In regard to his claim against the Maryland Jesuits, Pope Pius VII settled what seems to have been a deadlock by ordering that the plantation of White Marsh be given to the archbishop without reference

¹²⁴ *Ibid.* The pastor referred to was Enoch Fenwick, S.J., who had left the cathedral in 1820 to become rector of Georgetown College.

to granting this on the basis of any established right to financial support from the Society of Jesus. Other subsequent events seriously altered the settlement of the claim, but at least the settlement was an initial success, as was also the solution of the problem of the Diocese of Richmond and its Irish-born bishop. At the same time Maréchal obtained the return of Mississippi and Alabama to his jurisdiction. The appointment of bishops in the United States received some clarification in June 1822 when Rome decided that American bishops could recommend, not nominate, candidates for vacant or new episcopal sees.

Another accomplishment during Maréchal's visit to Rome considerably enhanced the American bishops' control of temporalities against the encroachments of lay trustees. On August 24, 1822, Pius VII defined a policy to be adopted by American bishops in his brief *Non sine magno*. In order to safeguard ecclesiastical property the bishop was to administer it along with the trustees who, in turn, were to be bound by civil contract to the effect that they held this property in trust for church use. Archbishop Maréchal proceeded to carry out this plan and in this Whitfield followed his footsteps during the subsequent administration.¹²⁵ The Baltimore prelate's success was crowned with honors for himself and the means to obtain them for others, that is, the position of an assistant at the pontifical throne for himself and a brief granting St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore, the power to grant theological degrees. Surely it was with a full heart that Maréchal joined in the hymn of thanksgiving upon his return to his episcopal city, for he likewise found matters in good condition under the guidance of Father Whitfield. In testimony of that fact he remarked on January 4, 1823: "My diocese is in peace. Piety has progressed; conversions have been remarkable,

¹²⁵ A case in point is that of the deed for the property of the Upper Marlborough church, Prince George's County, Maryland, over which there had been some controversy with the Jesuits. The documents of this affair may be found in Hughes, *Jesuits*, pp. 567-570, for the Maréchal policy and pp. 1108, 1113-1114 for the Whitfield follow-up. Specific reference to this policy was made by Archbishop Whitfield in a letter to John McElroy, S.J., on June 20, 1828, in regard to church property at the Maryland Tract: "I shall adhere strictly to the plan of my predecessor. And the deed must be absolute to me, as a deed in trust for the congregation would be invalid." (The original of this letter is in the Archives of the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus, hereafter AMP, 208-M-17.)

etc., etc., etc., I am very much in debt to the prudence and zeal of my Vicar, the Revd. Mr. Whitfield."¹²⁶ The latter did not have to wait long for his reward.

January 25, 1824, was a red-letter day for the Vicar General. Along with Father Louis Deluol and Edward Damphoux, Whitfield received the honor of Doctor of Theology at colorful ceremonies in the cathedral. The entry in Deluol's diary notes dourly that there was "rain and a violent wind all day," and a ceremony that lasted from 11:15 A.M. to 1:45 P.M.¹²⁷ During this time Samuel Eccleston, Whitfield's future episcopal successor, preached for one hour; the papal documents were read; and the profession of faith pronounced by the three nominees. Archbishop Maréchal invested them with the insignia by their doctorate, the rochet, cape, and four-cornered biretta. Solemn Mass celebrated by Father Honoratus Xanpi concluded the conferring of the first doctorates of theology in the American Church. These honors seem to have been granted *honoris causa* since there is no indication of the three priests having completed the academic requirements. Damphoux was president of St. Mary's College, while Deluol held a professorship in St. Mary's Seminary. As to the vicar general, Nicholas Sewall, S.J., made the following rather wry comment, "I don't see upon what title, or for what reason Mr. Whitfield should be *created* Doctor, what good will that empty name bring him? He seems to be of an unsettled disposition."¹²⁸ Nevertheless, the degree enhanced Whitfield's prestige for preaching as well as for conferences called by the archbishop.¹²⁹

There are still extant three complete sermons of Whitfield which were preached in 1824 and 1825.¹³⁰ The first important

¹²⁶ Hughes, *Jesuits*, p. 503. My translation from the French.

¹²⁷ Deluol, January 25, 1824.

¹²⁸ Quoted in a letter of William Beschter, S.J., to his superior, Francis Dzierozynski, S.J., December 14, 1824. AMP, 206-H-15.

¹²⁹ In his diary Deluol recorded the mere fact of conferences held and the names of those in attendance. On October 5, 1825, for example, Maréchal called one on Jesuit affairs; April 10, 1826, on the coming jubilee year declared by Pope Leo XII; and another on August 6 of this same year concerning Dubois as Bishop-elect of New York—all of which Whitfield attended along with others such as Tessier, Deluol and Damphoux.

¹³⁰ AAB, 21A-Y-2, 21A-W-1 and 21A-W-2. It is of interest that they were found in the files containing documents of Maréchal's administra-

occasion on record at which Whitfield preached was the requiem Mass for the Sulpician, Jean F. Moranvillé, pastor at Fell's Point, Baltimore, on July 21, 1824.¹³¹ No text of the sermon exists, but we do have a sermon preached in that same month on the subject of slander and detraction,¹³² and it is possibly the sermon preached at Moranvillé's requiem. In October, at a Mass attended by Lafayette, Whitfield expounded on the topic of envy!¹³³ On another important occasion the vicar general again surprised the congregation with an unrelated sermon at the beginning of the jubilee year of 1826.¹³⁴ One is at a loss to explain this practice, which must have mystified his listeners. When the body of Archbishop Carroll was transferred to the new vault of the cathedral, Whitfield was selected to deliver the eulogy, but we know nothing more than the fact.¹³⁵

In the early 19th century pulpit oratory held such an eminent position in religious services that sermons were often an hour or more in length. None of the extant sermons of Father Whitfield would have taken so much time. In fact, he seems not to have had much patience with others who did preach lengthy sermons: on the feast of the Ascension, May 24, 1827, Father Michael F. Wheeler, preacher on the occasion of a first Communion service, went on for about three quarters of an hour, and Whitfield, growing restive as the celebrant, finally interrupted him to go on with the Mass.¹³⁶

Regarding Whitfield's accomplishments in the pulpit, his friend, the archbishop, commented in a letter of February 1821 to Mother

tion, which must have misled Peter Guilday in his *England*, I, 208, to make the following statement: "A large collection of his [Maréchal's] sermons in English, in their original form, is extant in the Baltimore Cathedral Archives. . . ." The sermons are actually in the handwriting of Father Whitfield, which could have been detected by only a casual comparison of the handwriting, and they are dated, one July 1824, and the other two, the third and twenty-second Sundays after Pentecost, i.e., June 12 and October 23, 1825. The dates coincide with the period in which the vicar general was in particular demand for sermons.

¹³¹ Deluol, under this date.

¹³² AAB, 21A-Y-2.

¹³³ Deluol, October 10: "H. Whitfield a prêché sur l'envie, pas un mot de la circonstance."

¹³⁴ Deluol, May 14, 1826: ". . . sermon d'ouverture du Jubilé par M. Whitfield qui n'est presque pas entré dans la sujet."

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, December 3, 1824.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, May 24, 1827.

Claire Joseph of the Carmelites, who had inquired about Father Whitfield's welfare :

Rev^d Mr. Whitfield is very well indeed and is now one of the handsomest men in Balt^o. For according to the mode of speaking in Lancashire, fat and handsome are about synonymous. He does wonders in the pulpit, except when he preaches on penance. Worldlings who are unacquainted with the mortifications he practices in secret rashly judge that he enforces a doctrine which he does not himself follow.¹³⁷

From all contemporary sketches of Whitfield it is evident that he was a man of ample physical proportions. This portliness, however, did not decrease the demand for his services in the pulpit or for his company in the social circles of Catholic Baltimore.¹³⁸

One of his common forms of relaxation, along with several priest companions such as Deluol, Roger Smith, Damphoux, and Eccleston, was excursion on horseback to Ellicott Mills or to the Carroll Manor.¹³⁹ The Carrolls, along with the Catons, were at the head of the Catholic families, who had made their mark in the business and social world. Since Whitfield had been a merchant himself and possessed considerable wealth, it seems natural that prominent Catholics should have drawn him into their orbit. It would be incorrect, however, to infer that his social standing was independent of his position as vicar general or rector of the cathedral, because one usually found him accompanied by a number of other Baltimore priests. For example, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Caton, at whose Baltimore home Charles Carroll often win-

¹³⁷ Quoted in Charles W. Currier, *Carmel in America* (Baltimore, 1890), p. 140.

¹³⁸ "A man of culture and of considerable wealth, James Whitfield was easily one of the foremost citizens of Baltimore during the decade of years which intervened before his election as archbishop." Guilday, *England*, II, 114.

¹³⁹ Deluol: "1821 26 Octobre—Après diner cavalcade, avec M. Whitfield . . ." "1822 23 Avril—M. Damphoux, M. Smith et M. Whitfield sont à Ellicott mills en frolick." "24 Juin—Le soir allé promener à cheval avec M. Whitfield . . . à Ellicots mills puis à Carroll's manor . . ." Both the Ellicott Mills and the Carroll Manor were just a few miles west of Baltimore. The former were the flour mills of the Ellicott brothers, who introduced wheat growing in the area, and persuaded Charles Carroll to take a chance on such an enterprise—it was successful for both parties concerned. Matthew P. Andrews, *History of Maryland: Province and State* (New York, 1929), pp. 270-271.

tered,¹⁴⁰ on occasion entertained Archbishop Maréchal and his vicar general along with other priests.¹⁴¹ Whitfield has left us only a brief comment of his impression of the patriarch, who by this time was in his late eighties: "Yesterday at the distribution of ashes in the Cathedral, the Church was very full & by an admonition & good regulations all came to receive the ashes—Charles Carroll, . . . being of the first to give an example. The old Get^{mm} prefers the winter in Baltimore & he with the family give great edification—we dined with them the other day . . ."¹⁴² Other prominent Catholic citizens whose homes the future archbishop visited were David Williamson, president of the Baltimore Fire Insurance Company, at whose marriage in 1814 Archbishop Carroll had officiated, William Jenkins, merchant,¹⁴³ and Robert Barry, another merchant. At a dinner held by Barry on February 4, 1823, Whitfield, evidently punctilious on matters of social protocol, was reported to have taken offense at his incorrect position at table.¹⁴⁴ Other notable Catholic men whose company he enjoyed from time to time were John Walsh, Luke Tiernan, Charles Tiernan, Sr., and Basil E. Elder, all of whom were merchants.

After August 1826, Whitfield, having purchased a house of his own, became a frequent dinner host.¹⁴⁵ One might at first

¹⁴⁰ Mr. Caton, merchant and later cotton manufacturer in Baltimore, married Carroll's daughter, Mary, in 1786, after freeing himself of debt at the demand of the father-in-law. Charles Carroll later entrusted the management of his financial affairs to this son-in-law, whose home on the corner of Front and Lombard Streets had been a gift of the American patriot. Ellen H. Smith, *Charles Carroll of Carrollton* (Cambridge, 1942), p. 222 ff.

¹⁴¹ Deluol, February 18, 1822, and January 8, 1823.

¹⁴² AAB, 21-I-6, Whitfield to Maréchal, February 15, 1822.

¹⁴³ William Jenkins (1787-1843), a native Marylander, became known as the "Father of the leather trade of the city" (Card File, Archives of the Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore).

¹⁴⁴ Deluol, February 4, 1823.

¹⁴⁵ On July 11, 1826, Deluol records the first dinner he attended at Whitfield's home; others on November 12; January 11, 1827; April 17, July 5, September 11 and 27 of the latter year. According to the lists of guests given by Deluol, he and his confreres, Fathers Damphoux and Jean Chanche, were the most frequent in attendance. Archbishop Maréchal was present only twice, while two other Sulpicians are mentioned but once, John Tessier and James Joubert. It is interesting to note that two Jesuits, William Beschter and Stephen Dubuisson, were among the guests at the dinner on July 11, 1826, near the end of the second phase of the bitter controversy between the Society and Maréchal.

wonder at this move to live apart from Archbishop Maréchal, his most intimate friend. The only evidence of reason for this action is a veiled reference in the records of the trustees of the Baltimore cathedral: "The Archbishop informed the Board that the Rev. Dr. Whitfield wishing to relieve himself in part from the duties imposed on him had purchased a dwelling house for himself, and was willing to relinquish one-half of his salary toward the support of another priest provided the Trustees will provide the additional sum."¹⁴⁶ What those duties were we do not know. Once before for economic reasons Whitfield, along with Father Roger Smith, had moved from the archiepiscopal dwelling on Charles Street in the autumn of 1821 to the rectory adjoining old St. Peter's Church. Maréchal once again took up residence with them in 1823 and remained until 1825, when he finally settled at the home on Charles Street.¹⁴⁷ The Jesuit controversy, over the annual subsidy, had come to a second conclusion in August 1826, with Maréchal being awarded an annual pension. This, perhaps, aided the archbishop in maintaining his own table without the help of his wealthy vicar general. In view of the evidence, however, one is more inclined to attribute the move to Father Whitfield's desire to entertain socially without the archiepiscopal calendar or routine.¹⁴⁸

Aside from the struggle over the Jesuit pension, the year 1826 was a quiet one for the aging Archbishop of Baltimore. The disturbance over trusteeism had for some time been quieted; and

¹⁴⁶ Quoted in Riordan, *Baltimore*, p. 59.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ Some support for this opinion may be derived from two letters of Beschter to Dzierozynski, Baltimore, July 22, 1826 and August 7, 1826. (AMP, 207-H-9 and 207-H-15). The former states: "Since the Abp's departure for Canada, Revd. Mr. Whitfield has taken the resolution to buy a house and live by himself at his own expense, and has consulted me in all that business with the greatest confidence, he has written to the Abp at Quebec this resolution and still to continue as Pastor of the Cathedral." The latter: "Revd. Mr. Whitfield has bought a house to live by himself. Another priest will live with Revd. Mr. Smith at the priesthouse; and it is very probable that in the future the Abp will board with Mr. Whitfield." We know from other sources that this probability did not come to pass: "According to the Directories of the time, Archbishop Maréchal did not return to the rented house on Charles Street, but resided at Saint Peter's until 1825, when he again took up his residence on Charles Street in a house that had been purchased for him by the Trustees during the summer of that year. . . ." Riordan, *Baltimore*, p. 59.

there was as yet no evidence that Maréchal had become involved in the trouble brewing in Philadelphia between the aged Bishop Conwell and the trustees of St. Mary's Cathedral.¹⁴⁹ His successor, however, would have to take an active part in the Philadelphian struggle. A happy event brightened the year in the consecration of Maréchal's compatriot and Sulpician confrere, Jean Dubois, as Bishop of New York on October 29. Whitfield had participated in a conference in August about Dubois' acceptance of the see—¹⁵⁰ a weighty decision in view of the French priest's position at Mount Saint Mary's College and as director of the Sisters of Charity. During the previous years, moreover, there had been considerable difficulty between Mount Saint Mary's College and St. Mary's College in Baltimore, both of which had seriously strained the personnel and economic resources of the Sulpicians. The Baltimore members of the Society, who felt that two seminaries were more than sufficient for current needs, had voted to suppress the school at the Mount in 1818, a move which Maréchal had opposed. This action had been taken without consultation of the European superiors, and their subsequent disapproval led to a separation of the two institutions in their immediate administration, while remaining at the same time in the hands of the Society. In January 1826, Mount Saint Mary's College ceased to be a Sulpician institution, leaving the archbishop with the problem of determining the status of its seminary department. Maréchal did not live to see its final solution, but left his successor a set of instructions, which included a gradual suppression of the seminary department at Mount Saint Mary's.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ For the story of that struggle up to the time of Maréchal's death consult Hugh J. Nolan, *The Most Reverend Francis Patrick Kendrick, Third Bishop of Philadelphia, 1830-1851* (Philadelphia, 1948), pp. 61-72.

¹⁵⁰ Deluol, August 6, 1826.

¹⁵¹ In the summer of 1829 Archbishop Whitfield openly declared his intention to carry out the wishes of his predecessor in the matter. To John F. McGerry, president of the school, he wrote on August 26, 1829: ". . . I am far from wanting to injure your establishment, on the contrary, to favour it is my intention, as much as I can, without injuring the grand Seminary [St. Mary's, Baltimore] & the missions: but I must candidly acknowledge that I shall conduct myself by the rules laid down by my Predecessor, one of which is that you should send your students in Theology who belong to this diocese, after two years, to study one year in Balto, and certainly you might send two now, to this seminary, without any real injury to your College—. . . The time is not far distant when the

This, too, would prove to be another thorny problem in the legacy of Maréchal to Whitfield.¹⁵² One other cloud obscured the aging archbishop's horizon as the year 1826 drew to a close. He had not been completely satisfied in the settlement of the Jesuit pension, and for that reason he began to press for assurance of financial support for his successors. Maréchal did not live to complete this project either, and it became an additional burden for Whitfield in the ensuing years.

With the arrival of the new year little did Father Whitfield realize that when he preached upon the Epiphany of the Saviour on January 7, his own debut as Archbishop of Baltimore would dawn before that year would draw to a close. Maréchal spent the first half of the year with continued active duty through visitations and administering confirmation and sacred orders,¹⁵³ but his health began to wane under the constant pressure, and he suffered a violent attack of asthma on February 8.¹⁵⁴ Nevertheless, his episcopal duties were carried out until June 3, when he could no longer offer Mass. Thereafter his constitution became more feeble. During these months we find repeated references to the fact that Whitfield officiated and preached more often, especially

other rules laid down by the late Archbishop must be observed." The original of this letter is filed under date in the Archives of Mount Saint Mary's College, Emmitsburg, Maryland, hereafter AMSMC.

¹⁵² Whitfield himself was unable to force the suppression during his administration, and so the seminary at Emmitsburg has continued up to the present time. After the faculty and administration at the Mount had stoutly opposed the discontinuance of the seminary department Archbishop Whitfield wrote to them on May 10, 1832: "In a conversation with the Revd. Mr. [John] Purcell, President of St. Mary's College of this place, I agreed to permit that Theology should continue to be taught here during two years more, commencing from next September. And moreover as I most sincerely wish well to this noble establishment, & desire to see the day when it may be freed from the incumbrance of debt & from the danger of ruin, I add that were it absolutely necessary to continue Theology longer, that sooner than to see the College fall to destruction I would never prohibit its being taught—But still my opinion is that no such evil would follow." AMSMC, under date. Whitfield died on October 19, 1834.

¹⁵³ A notebook of Maréchal's, now in the Archives of the University of Notre Dame, shows a visitation tour, which began on April 24, 1827. In reprinting a few extracts from this notebook, the *American Catholic Historical Researches*, XIX (1902) 38, erroneously attributes it to Whitfield. This was clarified in a letter of the Reverend Thomas T. McAvoy, C.S.C., university archivist, to the writer dated February 7, 1955: "Item three is a notebook of Maréchal, not of Whitfield, although Whitfield does have one or two notes about marriages in it."

¹⁵⁴ Deluol, under date.

on the greater feast days such as Easter and the Ascension.¹⁵⁵ As the summer faded into autumn Archbishop Maréchal turned his thought toward choosing a successor, and by October he had made up his mind to recommend to Propaganda first James Whitfield and then Samuel Eccleston or Michael Wheeler.¹⁵⁶

During October the ailing prelate wrote two urgent appeals that the Holy See grant him a coadjutor with the right of succession. In his first communication he urged his vicar general as first choice: "He is a priest distinguished for tender piety, zeal, moving eloquence, exacting discipline. . . . Unfortunately he is advanced in age, he is about 57 years of age. Fortunately his sanctity is very sound."¹⁵⁷ Two weeks later, during which time Maréchal had been bled frequently, he again appealed to Rome: "Most Eminent Cardinal, prostrate at the feet of His Holiness I implore that as soon as possible R[ev]. James Whitfield (my Vicar General and first pastor of my Cathedral Church) be nominated and made my Coadjutor and successor in my See."¹⁵⁸ He begged immediate action so that he could have the consolation of performing the consecration. This plea was given a hearty support by Robert Gradwell, the archbishop's Roman agent, when he forwarded it;¹⁵⁹ and exactly two months later Propaganda endorsed Maréchal's recommendation.¹⁶⁰ Pope Leo VII, on January 8, 1828, gave his approval.¹⁶¹

Archbishop Maréchal seems not to have discussed his designs with anyone until November when he informed John Tessier, one of his most trusted Sulpician confreres, of his recommendations made the month before.¹⁶² Father Whitfield, however, was not made aware of the prelate's hope until December 11 when, as he told Gradwell, "I knew nothing of my name being proposed till the evening before our late beloved friend received the Viati-

¹⁵⁵ This is evident from the entries in Deluol's diary from April 4 onward.

¹⁵⁶ Maréchal to Propaganda, Baltimore, October 1, 1827, printed in the *Acta* of the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide (Rome, 1827), CLXXXX, 539.2.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 540.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 540.4.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 541.

¹⁶¹ AAB, 23-Q-1, bull of Leo XII.

¹⁶² Deluol, November 28, 1827.

cum, when he then informed me & remarked with tears, that it was after a long deliberation & and not thro' his particular friendship for me, but because he saw no one who was so likely as I to keep things in their present prosperous state & to go improving."¹⁶³ The vicar general protested that he had planned to return to England after the archbishop's death.

As the reports of the archbishop's health became more alarming, rumors began to circulate. Apparently Maréchal along with his confidants, Tessier and Whitfield, kept the news to themselves at least until late in January. Father Beschter wrote the following to his superior on January 11: "The wife of Mr. Luke Tierman said to Mr. Pise that the Abp told her that the Bp of Boston is to succeed him, and that he would ad interim perform all episcopal functions after his death; here end[s] the news of Mr. [Roger] Smith."¹⁶⁴ Outside of Baltimore the rumors took another turn as Father M. Du Burgo Egan of Emmitsburg told John Hughes at Philadelphia January 26:

If Mr. Deluol became Archbishop the institution of Baltimore will suffer a severe blow, which in addition to their pecuniary embarrassments will prevent them from accomplishing the objects they had in view for the good of religion—I hope however that they will continue to promote the glory of God and the good of souls as they have done for years.

I have understood from good authority that the coadjutor had been named previous to the death of Mr. Maréchal—it is suppose to lie between Mr. Deluol and Mr. Whitfield—a new report says Bishop Fenwick of Ohio—which I do not believe, but all must be left to Divine Providence, who will ordain everything for the best.¹⁶⁵

It was not until February, shortly after the archbishop's death, that the truth appeared when Father Beschter remarked to his superior: "I forgot to tell you that the Abp a few days before his death called Mr. Tessier, &c Mr. Deluol, in [the] presence

¹⁶³ Letter in the Archives of the English College, Rome, hereafter AECR, under date.

¹⁶⁴ AMP, 208-P-5, to Dzierzynski.

¹⁶⁵ Father Egan was a professor at Mount Saint Mary's College, Emmitsburg, while Father Hughes was to become Bishop of New York. This letter is in the Archives of the Archdiocese of New York, A-37, and was made available to the writer through the kindness of the biographer of John Hughes, the Reverend Henry J. Browne.

of Mr. Whitfield, and told them that he had recommended Mr. Whitfield, to be his Successor, this I have from Mr. W. himself!!!"¹⁶⁶

The end came for Baltimore's third archbishop about midnight on January 29. Tessier and Whitfield sent out a terse announcement of the sad news the following day.¹⁶⁷ In summing up the closing events in the life of his most intimate friend, the man who had been nominated to be his successor informed Gradwell on February 5:

As the deportment of the Archbishop was throughout life edifying in the highest degree, so has it continued to his last breath. His sickness was an enlargement of the heart & water on the chest, as appeared when the corpse was opened by the Physicians. His pains were not acute but it required great virtue to be so as he died a long protracted illness, & want of sleep, yet to the end he was patient, resigned, cheerful, desiring if it were the divine will to depart from his exile & go to Christ. In a word any one acquainted with his life & death, ought, as far as man can judge, to wish to live & die as Ambrose did. The profound respect & veneration for his memory was manifested by the immense concourse of citizens crowding the streets leading to St. Peter's where his body was reposed for three days & few of the 70,000 citizens we count, but had or strove to have a last glance at the pale but still sanctified countenance of the good Archbishop.¹⁶⁸

Officiating at the obsequies on February 2, Whitfield must have ruminated over the difficult task it would be to fill his predecessor's place. There is evidence of such thinking from an unsigned, and unsent letter in his handwriting:

The See of Baltimore is now vacant, and will continue so, untill the Sovereign Pontiff appoint a Successor. You are well aware how important it is for the prosperity of Religion in the U. States, that the choice of his Holiness may

¹⁶⁶ AMP, 208-P-22, to Dzierozynski, February 11, 1828.

¹⁶⁷ "Baltimore, January 30, 1828. On the 29th inst. a little before midnight our most Reverend Archbishop departed this life, in the 60th year of his age, and the 11th of his Episcopacy." Printed announcement, addressed to Mother Augustina Decount, second successor to Mother Seton, in the Archives of St. Joseph's Central House, Emmitsburg, under the title, "Archbishops," no. 21-22.

¹⁶⁸ AECR, under date.

fall on a person adorned with all the eminent virtues which the sublime and awful office requires. In the primitive ages of christianity, days of fasting and public prayers were appointed to obtain from the divine mercy that most important blessing.¹⁶⁹

The nominee seems not to have made the same impression on others if Father Beschter, his best friend among the Jesuits, was correct in remarking to the general of the Society, "... the Rev. Mr. James Whitfield wrote at his dictation, and entertains the greatest hope of succeeding, and of following in his footsteps,"¹⁷⁰ and again on February 18 Beschter noted "Mr. Whitfield is still in high spirits."¹⁷¹ All doubts and misgivings were cleared away with the arrival of the papal bulls on March 24.

In a decree dated January 8, 1828, Pope Leo XII nominated Whitfield to the titular See of Apollonia and three days later to the coadjutorship of Baltimore with right of succession.¹⁷² How the prospect of succeeding Maréchal affected him may be discerned from a letter to Propaganda in which he described the events surrounding his consecration. When his old friend had first informed him of his petition, Whitfield wrote, dread had come upon him at the approach of such a burden; and on the day of Maréchal's death he had undergone the same fear.¹⁷² Moreover, he added, as often as he had recalled the eminent qualities, learning, wisdom, and piety of his predecessor, his soul conscious of its weakness fled itself. The archbishop-elect was well aware of the burden, which he was assuming, because he had been the most intimate confidant of his predecessor, but putting his trust in God's help, as he told Propaganda, the charge was freely accepted.

The editor of the *United States Catholic Miscellany* gave hearty approval to the choice when he stated:

The discharge of the duties of this high station is not a novelty to him, he has long been in the habit of administering the affairs of the See over which he is now called to preside;

¹⁶⁹ AAB, 23A-R-1, February 12, 1828.

¹⁷⁰ Hughes, *Jesuits*, p. 1103, n. 15, to Luigi Fortis, January 23, 1828.

¹⁷¹ AMP, 208-P-23, to Dzierozynski.

¹⁷² AAB, 23-Q-1, 23-Q-2. To Mauro Cappellari, Prefect of Propaganda, May 27, 1828, erroneously filed in the documents of the Congregation of Sacred Rites for Central America, vol. IX, folio 642.

he is well known to his clergy and people, and knows them intimately; they are bound together in affection and mutual regard during a series of years. Hence so far as the Diocese of Baltimore is concerned, we believe a not more prudent appointment could have been made.¹⁷³

Similar sentiments were shared by Bishop Joseph Rosati of St. Louis in his congratulatory letter of August 30: "I could not hear of your promotion to that Metropolitan without feeling great satisfaction and content for the happy choice made in your respectable person by the Holy See, and the blessing thereby bestowed on the flock intrusted to your pastoral care."¹⁷⁴

The greatest day in the life of James Whitfield, former merchant, Jesuit novice, first rector of the Baltimore cathedral, and vicar general, arrived on Pentecost Sunday, May 25, 1828. He described the event for Dr. Nicholas Wiseman in Rome as follows:

My consecration took place on Whitsunday, the 25th inst. during a Solemn High Mass with such singing & music in our time as would have been applauded at Rome itself. Being a Sunday & especially Whitsunday many Priests who would have come to Balt^o could not leave their congregations but yet besides the three Bishops we had above thirty Priests & about 25 young Clergymen in the Sanctuary. As to the people our vast Cathedral was too small to contain them & great numbers remained without. Fifty members of Congress were present, being on their return from Washington to the Eastern States & a great many other Protestants who behaved respectfully & no doubt, were in general edified with that awful act of religion, performed with the greatest decorum & considerable religious pomp & splendor.¹⁷⁵

The names of the officers of the consecration ceremony as well as some others who attended are of considerable significance. Benedict J. Flaget, the venerable Bishop of Bardstown, had the honor of being consecrator, a role that made it possible for the episcopal lineage from John Carroll to remain intact, since the Kentucky prelate was the only one in the United States who

¹⁷³ May 3, 1828.

¹⁷⁴ AAB, 23-S-4.

¹⁷⁵ AECR, May 29, 1828.

had been consecrated by the first American bishop. In the two assisting bishops, Henry Conwell of Philadelphia and John Dubois of New York, two knotty problems were presaged for Whitfield's administration. The former was to be the center of the storm brewing in the Diocese of Philadelphia where the aged Conwell was destined to come under attack from trustees, censure of the Holy See, and restrictions from his metropolitan.¹⁷⁶ Dubois had been the founder of Mount Saint Mary's College and would soon bring the fourth Archbishop persistent opposition in his resolve to carry out his predecessor's plan to suppress the seminary department of that institution. Two Jesuits acted as chaplains to Archbishop Whitfield, Francis Dzierozynski, superior of the Maryland Jesuits, and William Beschter, pastor of St. John's Church. Both were to figure prominently in controversy with the archbishop. Francis Neale, the oldest priest and Jesuit present at the event, had already given stout opposition in the pension affair. John Tessier, S.S., was archpriest to Flaget in the ceremony. Not long after the consecration the archbishop wrote to Tessier, ". . . I have an enlightened & saintly counselor in my grand Vicar, the venerable President of the Seminary Revd Dr. Tessier, aged about 66, one of the most Holy men I know."¹⁷⁷ In the deacon, Louis Deluol, S.S., Whitfield found another good counsellor as well as faithful friend during his short administration. The preacher was Samuel Eccleston, S.S., Whitfield's choice and actual successor in the See of Baltimore.

Most conspicuous in absence was John England, the dynamic Bishop of Charleston who apparently had not been invited. The *United States Catholic Miscellany* commented on May 3:

Of course the Most Rev. Doctor JAMES WHITFIELD, is now Archbishop elect of that See, or perhaps, and we indeed believe, consecrated Archbishop—for we have learned that last Thursday the Feast of S.S. Philip and James, was the day selected by him. . . . Should the present Archbishop during the period of his administration find those obstacles

¹⁷⁶ This occurred particularly at the First Provincial Council in October 1829, when Whitfield did not permit Conwell to take part in the proceedings or to celebrate Mass in Baltimore. AECR, Whitfield to Wiseman, December 28, 1829: "The poor Bishop of Philadelphia arrived in Baltimore at the time of the Synod, but was not admitted to it."

¹⁷⁷ AECR, to Wiseman, May 29, 1828.

removed which stood in the way of his predecessor, we are inclined to think he would gladly avail himself of the opportunity of again making our Province an united body under his superintendence, rather than permitting it to continue a disjointed collection of isolated Dioceses, the prelates of which are bound together only in Faith and in affection.¹⁷⁸

In a letter to Whitfield on June 2, Bishop England complained of having received the news of his consecration too late; and reiterated his desire for a provincial council,¹⁷⁹ which he had been urging upon Maréchal, with no success and with some irritation, from 1822 to the time of the latter's death. Here was another problem to be faced by the new archbishop.

Within a few weeks of his consecration the new prelate carried out necessary procedure in informing his agent, Dr. Nicholas Wiseman, rector of the English College in Rome,¹⁸⁰ of recent events. He sent an account also to Propaganda, expressing concern for receipt of the pallium, the symbol of archiepiscopal jurisdiction.¹⁸¹ His request for the pallium was approved only on January 24, 1829, and he was invested with it on the following October 4 during the first Provincial Council.

In spite of difficulties and forebodings, James Whitfield entered his high office with both humility and confidence. He told Wiseman on May 29, 1828: ". . . the experience I have acquired

¹⁷⁸ The underscoring of "the Most Rev. Doctor" is original to the article—perhaps John England did this with his tongue in his cheek! The date of consecration is in error.

¹⁷⁹ "Of one circumstance I wish you to be assured, that I have no private wish to gratify, no private object to attain, no effort shall ever be made by me by cabals or intrigues to form a party, and I shall submit my opinion to the judgment of the majority of my brethren." AAB, 23-G-1. In regard to the controversy between England and the Archbishops of Baltimore, there is a serious problem in the fact that letters of the latter to England have been destroyed. ". . . there is nothing in the Charleston Archives that related to Archbishop Whitfield. There just are no archives for Bishop England. I presume all personal papers of his were burned in the fire of 1861 when the Cathedral and Seminary were destroyed." Letter to the writer from Richard C. Madden, St. Andrew's Church, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, April 11, 1955.

¹⁸⁰ The future English cardinal accepted Whitfield's request that he be Roman agent in a letter dated February 14, 1829. AAB, 23-V-3.

¹⁸¹ "As from the Pontifical it appears, that an archbishop, before receiving the Pallium, not only has no jurisdiction over his Suffragans, but cannot even ordain Clergymen or consecrate the oils, & that he is directed to ask for the Pallium, you will see in my letter to the Cardl. Prefect that I beg him to obtain it for me." AECR, May 29, 1828.

under the Archbishop during nearly 11 years, my age 57 & especially the light of Heaven which I hope to have, will prevent me from taking rash or imprudent steps. . . ."¹⁸² In much the same vein he replied to congratulatory notes from Father José Lopez: "I trust in the aid of the Almighty, who, I hope, has called me to the eminent post, & will enable me to fulfill my duties," and ". . . I earnestly beg your prayers for the Divine Assistance in my behalf, that he who can do & often does the greatest things by the weakest instruments, may manifest his power & goodness in enabling me to perform the arduous duties of my charge."¹⁸³ To this end he placed his administration under the patronage of our Lord and His Blessed Mother, whose images occupy the entire archiepiscopal shield under the motto, *Auspice Maria*. There were indications of loyalty to the memory of his predecessor as well as to his Sulpician training, both of which were deeply to color his administration.

¹⁸² AECR, under date.

¹⁸³ June 6 and March 28, 1828. Archives of Georgetown University, vol. VIII, no. 3.

THE CATHOLIC PRESS AND SECESSION, 1860-1861

BY JOSEPH R. FRESE, S.J.*

SECESSION was the climax of a turbulent decade. Opened with a heartening compromise, the preceding span of years had closed on its discouraging failure. Throughout this time America had witnessed a chaotic conglomeration of movements and events. Slavery, with the Kansas-Nebraska act, Dred Scott decision, and John Brown's raid, was but one of the more consistent threads knotting the skein of American life. Reforms and movements multiplied with the years. Abolition was but one of them. Women's rights, free soilers, temperance, spirit rapping, public schools, labor and other humanitarian movements, dotted the social as well as the political horizon. New social forces had come from another world to compound an immigrant ingredient with an immigrant basic. Coupled with "nativists'" objections were the protests of America's Protestant culture. Besides, the Know-Nothings and the Wide Awakes became vehicles of mob spirit that broke bounds in Cincinnati and New York and threatened to rehearse the Charlestown calamity. Politically America was stumbling upon new constitutional theories; manifest destiny released the springs of popular sovereignty; and congressional supremacy harbingered a downfall of state rights. Majority rule was to have its culmination in the 14th amendment. The death throes of an old era and the birth cries of a new were making the United States a boisterous democracy.

In this social and political scene, the Catholic Church had a very definite place. Never a strong body in the Protestant colonies, it was not until this decade that she had held her first plenary council. Two problems had asserted themselves: vigorous controversy with the sects and misunderstanding with the nativists. Both placed the Church religiously and politically on the defensive. Under the first head, the rise of abolition under the stimulation of numbers of the Protestant clergy and the subsequent split of almost all the sects over the slavery issue gave the Church an opportunity to stress its own neutral, conservative position. Consequently one finds in the study of the secession movement

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emphasis upon the part Protestantism and clerical abolition had in causing the movement and, on the other hand, almost undue emphasis upon the defense of slavery, particularly on moral grounds, as a legitimate relation between men. Under the second or political head, the issue had been complicated by the nationalist movement in Italy and the disruption of the papal states. Thus at the dawn of a new decade, Catholic spokesmen were busily defending the temporal power of the Pope and denouncing unwarranted revolution and the spirit of the age which had brought it on. This factor has a two-fold warning in a study of the Catholic press and secession: not to read too much into general statements or articles on revolution and secession which frequently refer to Italy and not to the South, and to estimate the importance or lack of importance this defense of the pope had in influencing Catholic opinion on secession.

One must remember also the essential character of the Church, demanding that her principal energies be devoted not to defending or denouncing secession but to saving the souls of men. This fact, evident to one who has looked through the sermons and ecclesiastical activities of the time, was emphasized as part of the controversial contrast with Protestantism. The following article of the Richmond, Virginia, *Dispatch* and its republication by the Catholic press indicate the prominence of this theme:

A tribute of warm commendation is due to the Catholic Church throughout the United States for the entire abstinence of its clergy from all intermeddling, either one way or the other, with the national troubles. Protestants, as we are, we feel bound to acknowledge and commend the manner in which they have always held entirely aloof from the antislavery agitation, and in which, during the present troublous times, they have neither taken side in the North with the North, nor in the South with the South, but have confined themselves to the appropriate duties of a kingdom which is not of this world.¹

The same theme with variations appeared in Catholic newspapers. Thus the *Guardian* of Louisville, Kentucky:

¹ March 8, 1861, quoted in the *Mirror*, April 6, 1861, and the *Tablet*, March 3, 1861. A similar notice from the New York Daily *News* was reprinted in *Mirror*, June 29, 1861.

. . . not a Catholic priest of the whole country has ever been known to lend himself, or to prostitute his pulpit, to the purposes of corrupt politicians. Our clergy literally know no North, no South, no East, no West; they are the same everywhere; and they attend everywhere to religion, and let the politicians take care of themselves. This is as it should be, and as it plainly is not, among a great portion of the Protestant preachers.²

Among the principal organs of Catholic opinion, Boston was represented by the *Pilot*, a strong campaigner for Douglas. New York had the *Tablet*, the *Metropolitan Record*, the *Freeman's Journal and Catholic Register*, also a Douglas paper, and *Brownson's Quarterly Review*; Philadelphia, the *Catholic Herald and Visitor*, anti-Douglas; Pittsburgh, the *Catholic*; Cincinnati, the *Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*; Louisville, Kentucky, the *Guardian*; St. Louis, the *Western Banner*; San Francisco, the *Monitor*. Farther south there was the *Catholic Mirror* in Baltimore, the *United States Catholic Miscellany* in Charleston, and the *Catholic Standard* in New Orleans.³

The editors of some of these periodicals showed, with the clergy, a reluctance to speak on political problems. They conceived the religious press to be in no competition with the political, or even with the mere news press. It was the advocate of religion and good morals and the disseminator of sound religious and general intelligence, non-political and without political opinions.⁴

When the growth of the secession movement and its importance to every phase of American life became apparent, the atti-

² The *Guardian*, Jan. 14, 1860. See also the *Catholic*, June 9, 1860; *Freeman's Journal and Catholic Register* (hereafter *Freeman's Journal*) quoted in *Guardian*, June 15, 1861. On this general topic see *Mirror*, June 16, 1860; April 20, 1861; *Guardian*, Nov. 24, 1860, Dec. 29, 1860; the *Telegraph and Advocate* (hereafter *Telegraph*) quoted in *Guardian*, Dec. 8, 1860; see also the controversy the *Catholic* had with the *Gazette* (Pittsburgh) on whether certain clergymen had been guilty of such a breach: *Catholic*, Sept. 1, Sept. 8, Sept. 15, 1860.

³ In this enumeration no attempt has been made to go into the history of the Catholic press of this period. The three campaign positions have been given to modify the statement of the next paragraph.

⁴ *Mirror*, Oct. 6, 1860, Sept. 29, 1860; *Catholic*, July 14, 1860; even Brownson was reluctant, *Brownson's Quarterly Review* (hereafter *Brownson's*), July 1860; see also the *Western Banner* quoted in *Catholic*, Dec. 22, 1860; *Herald and Visitor* (hereafter *Herald*), Jan. 21, 1860; *Guardian*, April 27, 1861, May 4, 1861, Jan. 26, 1861. This attitude did not prevent the *Pilot* from campaigning for Douglas or the *Herald* from opposing him.

tude of the editors began to change. Since the questions which agitated the country, "involve every issue of our social and political life, the religious press may be excused if, in its deep concern for such interests, it employs all its power in their conservation."⁵ The editors, lay and clerical, defended their rights as professional men and citizens to discuss the question of the day.

Consequent upon this attitude there arose, within the Catholic press, two controversies: one on the fundamental question of the relation of religion to politics, which included the press and the Church; the other on the varying ardor with which this relation was espoused, principally in the attitude of the North toward the South.

The most vigorous opponents of political discussion were the *Western Banner* of St. Louis and the *Guardian* of Louisville. The former especially objected to its Pittsburgh contemporary, the *Catholic*, imposing on all Catholics the duty, unqualifiedly asserted in the name of the Catholic religion, of subjugating the Confederate States, and to the *United States Catholic Miscellany* of Charleston asserting with equal authority, the duty of every loyal citizen to resist. The *Guardian* was equally vehement: "condemn secession, condemn centralization, coercion, and military despotism as you will; for God's sake, let the Church steer clear of all this irritating discussion!"⁶

Closely allied with this problem were the questions of flying flags over churches, singing patriotic hymns in churches, and the activity of Catholic chaplains in recruiting and making speeches. In its opposition to these practices the *Western Banner* was this time joined by the *Mirror*, which thus sums up the affair:

We disagree with those priests who have girded swords on their Catholic brethren; with priests who have baptized cannons; with priests who have denounced such of their flocks, as did not volunteer for the war, as traitors and cowards; and with priests who have undertaken to raise Irish

⁵ *Mirror*, Nov. 24, 1860. See also June 8, 1861; *Catholic*, July 6, 1861; *Telegraph* quoted in *Herald*, April 14, 1860 (the date is noteworthy in connection with the text); *Herald*, Dec. 22, 1860.

⁶ *Guardian*, May 25, 1861, quoted in *Mirror*, June 1, 1861. See also *Guardian*, June 8, 1861; *Western Banner*, quoted in *Mirror*, May 4, 1861.

brigades, with a promise of the Chaplaincy. We have disagreed with those of our priests and laity who mingled a worldly psalmody with their church music, and made the house of God redolent with national airs; its sacred walls so conspicuous with flag outside, and the song of the "Red, White and Blue", within, that strangers passing by, might suppose they were in the midst of barracks on a gala-day.⁷

Apart from the opposition of the *Western Banner* and the *Guardian* to any dogmatic attitude of the Catholic press on either side, there was another aspect of the same problem: the opposition of the *Mirror* to the anti-southern attitude of the *Catholic* of Pittsburgh and the *Telegraph* of Cincinnati. During August 1861 the *Catholic* had printed rather strong editorials on the establishment of a government and the subsequent obligations of the citizens of that government. This ignited the opening guns of the dispute fired by the *Mirror*, on August 3, 1861, objecting that the Pittsburgh paper could find no other test for Catholic loyalty than antipathy to the southern character and southern institutions. The following week brought a defense from the *Telegraph* and a reply from the *Catholic*. From this time until the last issue of the *Catholic* in December 1861, the two sides alternately barraged each other with charges of disloyalty and "Beecherism," while the *Telegraph* had come to the conclusion that the *Mirror* was "cracked."⁸

Among the causes of secession considered in Catholic publications were the "spirit of the age," the connivance of England, slavery and abolition, and finally southern ambition for the con-

⁷ *Mirror*, Nov. 23, 1861. The reference on the baptism of cannons is to Father Mooney, chaplain of New York's Sixty-Ninth; see *Mirror*, June 29, 1861, and July 6, 1861, communication. On other news items mentioned see *Catholic*, April 27, 1861; *Mirror*, Oct. 5, 1861; *Herald* quoted in *Mirror*, June 15, 1861; and for a criticism of them, *Western Banner* quoted in *Mirror*, May 4, 1861; *Mirror*, May 18, 1861, May 25, 1861, June 15, 1861, Oct. 12, 1861, communication.

⁸ *Catholic*, Aug. 10, 17, Sept. 7, Oct. 5, 12, Nov. 15, [16], Dec. 7, 28, 1861; *Mirror*, Aug. 31, Sept. 14, 28, Oct. 12, communication, Oct. 26, communication, Nov. 9, 23, 30, Dec. 14, 21, 1861. *Telegraph*, Sept. 7, (?), 21 (?), Oct. 19 (?), Nov. 2 (?), 16 (?), Dec. 7 (?), 1861. The general attitude of the *Catholic* will be noticed from the section on the establishment of a government. For a censure of the southern papers, however, see, Feb. 23, 1861, and the *Telegraph* (?) both of which are quoted in the *Tablet*, March 16, 1861. "Beecherism" referred to the Protestant clergy's meddling in politics and particularly in abolition.

trol of the government. The first of these comprised various elements, of which an important item was the nationalist movement in Italy. Napoleon III and Cavour and the war with Austria, Garibaldi and the annexation of papal territory, had the Catholic press of this country crowded with defenses of the temporal sovereignty of the supreme pontiff and denunciations of "liberal" sympathizers in America. John Brown's raid into Virginia proved to be only too logical a comparative argument. In the North the emissaries of Sardinia were considered John Browns, whom as Brownson said, "Virginia would have hung by the neck till they were dead, dead, dead;"⁹ while some Catholics in the South wondered how southern papers could encourage these foreign vagabonds with the lesson of John Brown so near at hand.¹⁰

When the secession movement grew stronger, however, Catholic editors in the North saw a vital connection between this spirit of the age and the secession movement of the South. Secessionists were placed in the same category as the revolutionists in Italy, resisting a legitimate temporal government without just cause. Then, too, it was not to be wondered at, if the South should take to heart lessons of revolt that had been preached throughout the press. Men had been taught so long that they owed no duty to any government longer than it suited their particular views or prejudices, that, as the *Tablet* remarked:

We must not be surprised to find to-day a confusion of ideas which makes Revolt, Patriotism; treason, independence; resistance to law, opposition to tyranny,—and the destruction of the freest government that ever existed, a sacrifice on the altar of Liberty.¹¹

The Southern voices in the Catholic press on their part deeply resented the implication that they were "like the modern revolutionists the world over," and "a party of restless and unsatis-

⁹ *Brownson's*, April 1860, quoted in the *Mirror*, April 28, 1860.

¹⁰ *United States Catholic Miscellany* (hereafter *Miscellany*), July 7, 1860. For this paragraph see also, *Brownson's*, July 1860; *Freeman's Journal*, March 24, 1860; Bishop Spalding in *Guardian*, Feb. 18, 1860, quoted in *Mirror*, March 3, 1860; *Mirror*, March 3, 1860; *Herald*, June 23, 1860; *Pilot*, Nov. 3, 1860; *Freeman's Journal*, Feb. 25, 1860, March 3, 1860, April 14, 1860; Bishop Spalding in *Mirror*, March 17, 1860.

¹¹ *Tablet*, Jan. 12, 1861.

fied spirits, loquacious lawyers, mad theorists, needy adventurers, irresponsible journalists of the sensation school, and others of similar propensities.”¹² And because the Philadelphia *Herald* implied as much the Baltimore *Mirror* and the *United States Catholic Miscellany*, of Charleston, rose in arms. The latter “justly stigmatized the comparison as wanton insult.”¹³ Their contemporary had mistaken entirely the character of the secession movement which pervaded the South. The subsequent apologies of the *Herald* availed nothing with the Charleston critics. The *Herald* could only appeal to its past, and assert, with some justification, that it had always held the right of state interposition and peaceable secession.¹⁴

Another outside influence considered in Catholic publications as a cause of secession was England: jealous of the growing power of the republic, she was seen trying to disrupt the Union. There were two aspects to this attempt. On one side the British government was seen pouring large sums into the abolitionist camp through Exeter Hall; on the other British agents were accused of prompting the “conspiracy” in the South. The Irish would be piqued at “her desire to give republican institutions a quiet stab in a friendly way.”¹⁵

Catholic spokesmen considered also the “vexed question of slavery which has caused all the troubles which surround and threaten us.”¹⁶ The position of the Church reduced itself to three fundamental tenets: condemnation of the slave trade; tolerance of slavery on moral grounds in opposition to Protestant abolitionists who condemned it as a sin; disapproval of immediate emancipation because of its attendant evils. Catholic leaders in-

¹² *Herald*, Nov. 17, 1860.

¹³ *Miscellany*, Dec. 8, 1860.

¹⁴ The article the *Herald* appealed to on Dec. 22, 1860, appeared Oct. 20, 1860. For the remainder of the controversy see *Mirror*, Nov. 24, Dec. 29, 1860; *Miscellany*, Nov. 24, 1860.

¹⁵ *Tablet*, Feb. 2, 1861. For aid to the abolitionists see *Pilot*, Jan. 28, Feb. 18, Dec. 28, 1860; *Metropolitan Record* quoted in *Catholic*, Sept. 7, 1861; *Mirror*, Nov. 2, 1860. For aid to the secessionists see *Tablet*, Feb. 2, Sept. 7, Oct. 5, 26, Nov. 2, 1861; *Freeman's Journal*, May 19, 1860. The main support for this paragraph was drawn from two pro-Irish papers, the *Pilot* and the *Tablet*; even the *Metropolitan Record* and the *Freeman's Journal* were in the Irish town of New York. Exeter Hall was a large religious meeting place on the Strand, London.

¹⁶ *Guardian*, April 27, 1861. See also *Brownson's*, July 1861, Oct. 1861.

sistently dwelt upon this fundamental distinction between domestic slavery and the slave trade.¹⁷

Defense of slavery as a legitimate human relation found frequent utterance in the troublous times of secession. Catholic principles and Catholic sentiment, as the *Freeman's Journal* remarked, "require no one to *approve* or to *like* slavery, but they teach all to regard it as a question of circumstances, and as having its conditions of *right* as a human relationship."¹⁸ Archbishop Hughes said that the Church opposed slavery "only in the sense that she is opposed even to the calamities of human life, which she had no power to reverse."¹⁹ The *Guardian* added, "We do not deny that there are Catholics who are opposed to the institution of slavery; but we do deny that there are any who are ready to trample on the Constitution of the country to effect a change in the relations between the masters and slaves."²⁰ The abuses of this relationship the Church did condemn: "Thus the Catholic Church distinguishes. She recognizes slavery as lawful, and as sometimes necessary, but she never recognizes its abuses."²¹ This relationship was thus modified by certain important considerations. In the first place it was not an absolute dominion. Since no man had an absolute right over his own life and limb, in the sense that he could destroy them as he would, so he could hold no such authority over any one else's, but only over the usufruct of them. This relationship of what is called imperfect slavery was not instituted by natural law, but its causes and reasons are approved by that law. Sale of oneself, capture in a just war, crime, debts, dependence, and long possession in good faith were legitimate origins of this exchange of labor for sustenance. Furthermore, divine positive law was not against slav-

¹⁷ *Catholic*, March 2, 1861; *Pilot*, Jan. 14, 1860; *Miscellany*, Aug. 4, 1860. On the slave trade, see Bishop Verot, *A Tract for the Times*, p. 10. Archbishop Hughes, *Metropolitan Record*, quoted in *Mirror*, Oct. 12, 1861; *Brownson's*, July 1860; *Tablet*, Sept. 15, 29, 1860; *Mirror*, Dec. 1, 1860. This fundamental distinction had been made by Bishop England in 1840 in his "Letters on Domestic Slavery"; see his *Works*, Ignatius Reynolds, ed., III, 106-191.

¹⁸ *Freeman's Journal* quoted in *Guardian*, Feb. 9, 1861.

¹⁹ *Metropolitan Record* quoted in *Mirror*, Oct. 12, 1861.

²⁰ *Guardian*, Jan. 28, 1860. See also Jan. 14, 1860. The *Guardian* was the most consistent controversialist with Protestants on this question.

²¹ *Freeman's Journal* quoted in *Guardian*, Feb. 9, 1861.

ery: in the Old Testament the Hebrews held slaves, while the New made no law prohibiting slavery, and the apostles frequently recognized its existence. In addition both canon and civil law approved the institution with St. Gregory a witness of the one, as the Constitution was for the other.

Since, however, slavery lent itself to abuse, there were certain conditions, which had to be fulfilled to legitimize this relationship: condemnation of the slave trade, respect of the rights of free negroes, respect of marriage ties, making separation unmoral, abandonment of the immorality connected with the institution, and regard for the right of the slave to religious practice. Such was the Catholic "defense" of slavery, more a defense against the abolitionists than an advocacy of slavery. Emancipation was to be brought about by the spirit of the Church, which had destroyed Roman slavery, not by the radicalism of the sects. For the sake of the Negro, immediate emancipation was not the solution to the slavery question.²²

Two voices among the Catholics did, nevertheless, stir some excitement. On September 14, 1861, the editor of the *Tablet* printed the following:

Now we, with, at present, we believe, nearly the entire North, consider Slavery to be wrong of itself, and, though willing to leave Slavery in the Slave States entirely to the inhabitants thereof, are unalterably opposed, and have ever been opposed, to its extension into territory now free.

The following week the *Tablet* carried this notice:

The gentleman who conducted the Editorial Department of the *Tablet* for the past three years has ceased his connection with it since our issue of the 14th instant. The editor

²² These views are taken for the most part from Verot, *A Tract for the Times*, which to my mind is the clearest and briefest exposition of the subject. An article by Orestes Brownson evoked a vigorous defense from Archbishop Hughes in *Metropolitan Record*, quoted in the *Mirror*, Oct. 12, 1861. The views expressed, however, are supported by many references, e.g., *Mirror*, Oct. 27, 1860, Feb. 16, April 26, July 27, Aug. 24, 1861; *Pilot*, May 5, Dec. 15, 1860; *Freeman's Journal*, quoted in the *Guardian*, Jan. 26, 1861; *Telegraph*, quoted in the *Guardian*, Dec. 8, 1860; even *Brownson's*, July 1861; Cuthbert Allen, "The Slavery Question in the Catholic Newspapers," *Historical Records and Studies*, xxvi, 99-169; Robert Murphy, "The Catholic Church during the Civil War," *Records*, xxix, pp. 272-283, 289-297.

labored insidiously to establish not only what is called a "Black Republican" character for the paper, but even to make it an abolitionist organ. This, of course, could no longer be tolerated.

A controversy soon arose. The former editor wrote a letter to the New York *Tribune*, one of those "abolitionist organs," stating that he had resigned after a four months notice and that the article "was made the pretext for trumping up a charge of 'Abolitionism,' spiced with inuendos about 'New England fanaticism'." The fundamental difference was the conflict in attitudes of the publishers and the editor on the whole question of the "rebellion." Whatever the real reason, the next issue of the *Tablet* carried editorials on "Our Free Schools," "The Church of All Ages," and the "Assassination of One of the Pope's Guards," and on October 5, in reviewing *Brownson's Quarterly Review*, remarked that the article on "Slavery and the War comes next, but this is a subject on which we cannot enter without deviating from the line marked out by ourselves." The issue, however, did carry "union" editorials on the war.²³

The other voice was that of Orestes Brownson. In an article on "Slavery and the War" he opened the attack on three principal points: the status of slavery, the purpose of the war, and a slave insurrection. In October 1861 he wrote:

Slavery, say what we will of it, is a great moral, social, and political wrong, . . . It requires, . . . no extraordinary sagacity or foresight to perceive that, if the present war is to be continued, . . . [it] can hardly fail to become a war of liberation, . . . [the emancipated Negro in the South] would not only compel the Rebels to keep a large force, that might otherwise be employed, at home, to protect their own wives and children, but would deprive them of the greater portion of that labor by which they now subsist their armies.²⁴

The cudgels were taken up by the *Metropolitan Record* and more persistently by the Baltimore *Mirror*. The whole question

²³ *Tablet*, Sept. 14, 21, 28, Oct. 5, 1861. New York *Tribune*, Sept. 21, 1861, quoted in *Catholic*, Sept. 28, 1861; see also *Catholic*, Oct. 12, 1861. Despite the quotations, I do not believe that either the editor of the *Tablet* or *Brownson* meant that slavery was a sin in itself.

²⁴ *Brownson's*, Oct. 1861.

evoked a lengthy response from Archbishop Hughes²⁵ and made Dr. Brownson in the eyes of the *Mirror*, a "philosophic and theological suspect."²⁶ On the purpose of the war the archbishop's views were vehement: "we despise in the name of all Catholics", the "idea of making this war subservient to the philanthropic nonsense of abolitionism."²⁷ As for the insurrection, the *Mirror* repeatedly painted for its readers the horrors of the "Massacres of St. Domingo" and asked if there was a "lower sink of brutality", into which "bloody-mindedness could fall."²⁸ Two months later, after repeated attacks and denunciations, even quoting Brownson's views of slavery in 1853, the Baltimore paper was still criticizing Brownson the abolitionist.²⁹

The polemical aspect of Catholic journalism is aptly illustrated in the views expressed on Protestantism and abolitionism as causes of the secession. Fundamentally it was the old argument used against the Know-Nothings: "Republicanism cannot subsist without solid virtue in the people; but solid virtue has no foundation save true Religion. Therefore the Catholic Church is a safeguard of our institutions"!³⁰ The unity of the republic was impossible without certain great fundamental principles, which Protestantism could not supply. The sects, indeed, had fostered a spirit of disunion; the churches North and South had different creeds and different systems of morality. This difference and disunity of essentially local religion was based on the doctrine of private judgment, which, by making every man his own theologian, had created an anti-slavery North and a pro-slavery South. Thus Protestantism "after splitting the religious world into fragments, is now engaged in carrying out the kindred work

²⁵ See note 22 above.

²⁶ *Mirror*, Oct. 5, 1861. For a development of Brownson's views see, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *Orestes A. Brownson*, pp. 79-80, 240-45.

²⁷ *Metropolitan Record* quoted in the *Mirror*, Oct. 12, 1861.

²⁸ *Mirror*, Oct. 26, 1861. See also Nov. 9, 16, 23, 1861. *Metropolitan Record* quoted in *Mirror*, Oct. 12, 1861.

²⁹ *Mirror*, Oct. 12, 19, 26, Nov. 2, 23, Dec. 28, 1861. The *Mirror* also rebuked Brownson for blaming the war on the South. The *Catholic* thought that the proposal to make abolition the war cry of the Union army did not detract from the general merits of the article, Oct. 5, 1861. For an intimation of a similar suggestion on abolition see *Tablet*, Dec. 14, 1861. See also *Brownson's*, July 1861.

³⁰ *Telegraph* quoted in *Guardian*, Dec. 8, 1860.

of breaking up this noble and glorious confederation of States.”³¹

Furthermore this system of private judgment had created in the North a group of radical and fanatic preachers whom the *Guardian* remarked “have been the chief instigators, if not the principal causes, of the present momentous crisis of the country. . . . We can almost see these white cravatted agitators turning up the whites of their eyes every Sunday, and thanking their God that they are not like the rest of men, even these abominable publicans of slave-holders at the South!!”³² “We charge distinctly on the Protestant preachers, *North*—that instead of allaying, they have sought to fan the flame of fratricidal dissension; and instead of pouring the oil of divine love on the troubled waters they have contributed to agitate them still more.”³³ The *Mirror* asserted that “There are men in these United States, in clerical garments, . . . [who] have done evils to this country which they can never repair.”³⁴ The *Guardian* remarked, “Verily, the children of the *Pilgrims* are *rocking the cradle of Liberty with a vengeance*.”³⁵

Closely allied with this “white cravatted” group of clerical abolitionists were politicians of the same stamp. The *Pilot* reminded its readers: “To the destruction of the confidence which should exist between the two sections by the senseless agitation of the slavery question in the North by demagogues, lay and clerical, will the enemies of our republican system be indebted for this catastrophe to a nation’s hopes.”³⁶ Speeches utterly lacking in statesmanship and judgment made the political abolitionists firebrands of the nation. Such rabid fanaticism was neces-

³¹ *Guardian*, Jan. 12, 1861. See also *Freeman’s Journal*, June 16, 1860; *Mirror*, Jan. 12, 1861; *Guardian*, Dec. 29, 1860, also quoted in *Mirror*, Jan. 12, 1861; *Guardian*, Jan. 26, Feb. 23, 1861; *Pilot*, June 2, Dec. 15, 1860. On another aspect of this private judgment argument, that secession was the carrying out of the principle of private judgment, see Archbishop Purcell’s speech in Cincinnati, in *Tablet*, Feb. 2, 1861.

³² *Guardian*, Jan. 12, 1861.

³³ *Ibid.*, Dec. 29, 1860, quoted in *Mirror*, Jan. 2, 1861.

³⁴ *Mirror*, Sept. 15, 1860.

³⁵ *Guardian*, Jan. 12, 1861. On Protestant abolitionists as a cause of secession, see also *Guardian*, Nov. 24, Dec. 22, Dec. 29, 1860, Jan. 5, 12, 19, 26, Feb. 2, May 18, 1861; *Mirror*, Sept. 15, Nov. 17, 1860, March 9, April 20, 27, Nov. 16, 1861; *Pilot*, Oct. 20, Dec. 1, 1860; *Catholic*, Nov. 24, 1860, Aug. 17, 1861; *Tablet*, Sept. 21, 1861; “Pastoral Letter of the Third Provincial Council of Cincinnati,” in *Guardian*, May 18, 1861.

³⁶ *Pilot*, Dec. 29, 1860.

sarily destructive of the union, for no man would remain in "alliance" with another, who denounced his most valuable property. Thus secession was considered due to abolitionism, for as the *Guardian* said: the "pestilent intermeddling . . . by Yankee Puritans . . . has contributed more perhaps than any other cause to bring about the present terrible crisis in our political affairs."³⁷ Finally a rhythmical voice in the *Mirror* cried out:

Save the Union, ye who rent it,
Bigots who inflame the strife;
Who with blood would now cement it,
Who with wounds would give it life.³⁸

Closing the ranks of the abolition forces of preachers, politicians, and demagogues as a cause of secession were the editors of the press. The "nigger worshippers" of the North were set on abolition at all costs to the integrity of the union. The *Freeman's Journal* asserted that, "The civil war *on paper* must be stopped or it *must* develop into a war *not* of words."³⁹

But the question of abolition had a much broader implication. Slavery was a local affair. It concerned not the will of the majority but the principle of state rights, i.e., a reservation of certain powers to the states, in the exercise of which they could not be hindered. Among these powers was that relating to slavery. Thus any interference would be a disregard of the national "compact." Abolition, then, takes on a new aspect. Slavery is nothing, "but it is important that all the States should be free and equal, without being overruled by others of other views or interests." Thus in a deeper sense was abolition a cause of secession. The citizens of one state had been interfering with the constitutional rights of the citizens of other states. "And it is this very unwise interference which has brought our great and magnificent Republic to the brink of ruin."⁴⁰

³⁷ *Guardian*, Jan. 25, 1861.

³⁸ *Mirror*, Dec. 7, 1861. See also on political abolitionists and demagogues: *Catholic*, August 17, 1861; *Pilot*, March 10, June 2, 23, 30, Dec. 1, 15, 1860; Thomas Francis Meagher in *Tablet*, Oct. 12, 1861; *Tablet*, Sept. 21, 1861; *Herald*, June 2, Dec. 22, 1860; *Freeman's Journal* quoted in the *Guardian*, June 1, 1861; Bishop Elder in *Mirror*, Feb. 18, 1860; *Mirror*, May 4, July 20, Dec. 28; *Pilot* quoted in *Mirror*, Nov. 30, 1861.

³⁹ *Freeman's Journal*, Jan. 27, 1860. See also *Pilot* quoted in *Mirror*, Nov. 30, 1861; *Guardian*, May 4, 1861; *Catholic*, Aug. 17, 1861.

⁴⁰ Quotations from *Mirror*, April 20, 1861, Dec. 15, 1860; remaining

Further, among the causes of secession, some Northerners suspected that the South wished to control the federal government:

No intelligent man at the South believed that the success of the Republican party threatened directly the institution of slavery; but the whole South saw in it the fact that the political control of the Union had passed from Southern hands, and that henceforth the Slaveholding States would be obliged to be contented to stand on a footing of equality with the non-Slaveholding States."⁴¹

Again the rebellion was conceived by some to have for its object not so much the dissolution of the Union, or a separation of the South from the North, as a reconstruction of the Union on the basis of slavery. The leaders of the rebellion had worked themselves into the conviction that slavery was a good to be desired and extended as far as possible. Their plan was the reconstruction of the federal government in accordance with this theory. Ultimately, by conquest the South,

could extend its power over the whole continent of South America, and threaten an advance upon Eastern Asia, and the annexation of all the cotton-producing countries and tropical regions of the globe, and through the monopoly of cotton, rice and tropical productions in general, to obtain the control of the commerce and credit of all nations.⁴²

If the demagogues in the North had been blamed for secession, the "scheming politicians" in the South did not escape like censure at the hands of the North. The South had been brought to this sad pass by a set of fire-eating leaders, whose only hope of future preeminence in public life depended upon the establishment of a separate confederacy. The people of the South had been deceived by false news of the loyalty of the North. They

ideas from *Herald*, Oct. 20, 1860; *Mirror*, Nov. 3, Dec. 1, 1860. See also *Brownson's*, July 1860, July 1861; Archbishop Hughes, *Metropolitan Record*, quoted in *Tablet*, Sept. 14, 1861; *Mirror*, Aug. 3, 1861; *Guardian*, Dec. 1, 1860 (given as Southern arguments, not as its own); *Standard* quoted in *Miscellany*, Dec. 8, 1860.

⁴¹ *Brownson's*, July 1861. See also Thomas F. Meagher in *Tablet*, Oct. 12, 1861.

⁴² *Brownson's*, Oct. 1861. See also *Pilot*, Dec. 29, 1860. The *Mirror* calls the idea "Buncombe" in the famous "Slavery and the War" article.

had been given the impression that Lincoln could not obtain men or money if he wanted to make war.

For those who have misled them we have no excuse, . . . to offer . . . Let them meet, . . . the traitor's doom . . . The American citizen who seeks to overthrow the American Government is not only a traitor, but a liberticide, a dehumanized monster not fit to live or to inhabit any part of this globe: he has no suitable place this side of hell.⁴³

Such was Catholic editorial opinion on the causes of secession: the spirit of the age, England's connivance, slavery and Protestant abolition, the desires and demagogues of the South. Concerning the legality of the movement, arguments were no less developed, despite a very practical difficulty. A large portion of the Church's membership was composed of immigrants, and many Catholics were naturalized citizens. In the process of naturalization they had taken an oath of allegiance. Now the problem was, at secession, to what were they bound by that oath? The question was thus proposed to the editors of the *Cincinnati Telegraph*:

Very Rev. and Rev. Editors:

I would wish to know whether in your opinion a naturalized citizen, even in the South, can take part with the Southern Confederacy without the guilt of perjury? In becoming a citizen he swore fealty not to any State, but to the United States. Does that oath mean anything? If not, to take it was a sin. If so, it must bind to fidelity to the constitutionality elected President and Congress.

Conscience⁴⁴

To this problem, there were three possible solutions. *Guardian* stated that "there are learned men, and honest men, and truly religious men, who differ as to what duty, or to use another word, conscience, requires at their hands."⁴⁵ The *Western Banner* explained:

⁴³ *Brownson's*, July 1861. See also *Tablet*, April 27, 1861, June 15, 1861; *Catholic*, April 27, 1861; *Pilot*, Nov. 24, Dec. 29, 1860; *Tablet*, Jan. 5, April 27, 1860; *Mirror*, Oct. 12, 1861.

⁴⁴ *Telegraph*, May 18, 1861?, quoted in *Guardian*, May 25, 1861. From the excellent wording of the case one wonders if the *Telegraph* is not posing its own question to make amends for its southern sympathy before the war.

⁴⁵ *Guardian*, June 15, 1861.

In other words, that the present strife is purely a political strife, in which either party may be right or wrong, of which communities and States are the sole judge, and in which men without violating conscience will take part according to the bias of education, sympathy, and surroundings.⁴⁶

The southern solution in one of its aspects was simply a confirmation of this: the oath of allegiance did not so bind the naturalized citizen that he could not, for example, vote for secession candidates for the state convention. But a more vigorous view was proposed. A writer in the Baltimore *Mirror* held that the Act of Congress of April 14, 1802, had required a pledge to the Constitution, but not an oath of allegiance to the United States. The naturalized citizen would become a citizen of the United States by becoming a citizen of the state wherein he was naturalized. Consequently it was manifest,

that the oath to support the Constitution of the United States is subordinate to State allegiance; and that when the two came in conflict, by the withdrawal of a State from the Union, the citizen must obey his state, and refuse obedience to the unauthorized demands of the Executive or legislative functionaries of the general Government.⁴⁷

Finally, there was the northern solution to the problem as maintained by the Cincinnati *Telegraph*:

An oath binds a man under penalty of perjury to do what he conscientiously considered his words to promise. Apart from ignorance, prejudice, or false representation, we believe that every naturalized citizen has, according to the intent of the form of naturalization, sworn to support the legally constituted Government at Washington.⁴⁸

The *Catholic* sponsored the answer of the *Telegraph*, stating that

⁴⁶ *Western Banner* quoted in *Guardian*, May 25, 1861, the whole of which was printed in *Mirror*, June 1, 1861. See also Archbishop Hughes in *Metropolitan Record*, Sept. 14, 1861; *Tablet*, March 23, 1861; *Mirror*, March 30; Bishop Quinlan, *Mobile Daily Register*, quoted in *Mirror*, July 6, 1861; *Mirror*, Oct. 12, 1861.

⁴⁷ *Mirror*, Sept. 14, 1861. See also *Mirror*, Sept. 28, 1861. For the moderate view see the Rev. C. M. Sears in *Standard* quoted in *Miscellany*, March 2, 1861.

⁴⁸ *Telegraph*, May 18, 1861?, quoted in *Guardian*, May 25, 1861. Also supporting this view: *Catholic*, June 1, 1861, *Tablet*, Jan. 26, Dec. 14, 1861, *Monitor* quoted in the *Guardian*, June 22, 1861.

it was not a war between the North and the South, but between legal authority and usurpation. The *Guardian*, however, lamented that the *Telegraph* had printed the letter: "What we would wish is, that Catholic organs in both sections should not pronounce dogmatically on the question or questions involved, . . . Both sections are more or less wrong, no doubt, but both sections think they are right." Let the members of the Church in both sections act for themselves, and let no one brand them as traitors or perjurers.⁴⁹

Fundamentally the obligations of the oath depended on the legality and defensibility of secession, which, owing to the peculiar nature of our system of government, had two forms. Secession could be legal on constitutional grounds or on the basis of rightful revolution. On both of these grounds, constitutional and revolutionary, Catholic opinion was divided.

The southern view of the constitutionality of secession was in turn based on two main constitutional grounds: the idea of state sovereignty and the compact nature of the Constitution. It was argued, particularly by Abbé Perché, that each state was sovereign, conceding certain rights of sovereignty in forming the confederacy, but retaining sovereignty itself. In virtue of this retained sovereignty, each state had the right to secede from confederacy when it judged that the motives were insufficient. Since, however, the states had severally decided that such motives existed, secession was legitimate, and, as a natural consequence, it was the duty of the citizens of these states to recognize no other sovereignty than that of their state. "When the reserved rights of States are palpably, deliberately, and dangerously violated, by the general government, the State has, under the Constitution, the reserved right of acting in her high sovereign capacity, to interpose and arrest usurpation," or in other words, to secede.⁵⁰

Secondly, and in a sense springing from this doctrine of re-

⁴⁹ *Guardian*, May 25, 1861, also quoted in *Mirror*, June 1, 1861. See also *Catholic*, June 1, 1861.

⁵⁰ *Herald*, Dec. 22, 1860, quoted also in *Mirror*, Dec. 29, 1860. See also Abbé Perché in *Propagateur Catholique* (New Orleans) quoted in *Free-man's Journal* and in *Catholic*, Feb. 23, 1861; also in *Miscellany*, quoted in *Mirror*, Dec. 29, 1860, *Mirror*, Oct. 19, 1861.

tained sovereignty, was the argument of the compact nature of the constitution, agreed upon by all the states. Since some of the contracting parties had violated the terms of agreement, they had *ipso facto* released the remainder from their obligation. The Baltimore *Mirror* remarked that "The Northern States have clearly nullified, and have therein broken the compact between the States, so that they give an unquestionable right of secession to the Southern States, even if that right was doubtful before."⁵¹ "*Frangenti fides, fides frangatur eidem.*"⁵²

Consequent upon this compact nature of the Constitution, and its creation of a government of delegated and restricted powers, when secession did take place, it was held that it could not be arrested by force. The national government was nothing more than an agency, vested with certain powers among which there was no power specified to use force, or to maintain war even against a refractory state. Consequently secession was justified from the impotency of the government to prevent it. The Philadelphia *Herald* maintained:

Now, as there was no power delegated or enumerated among the other delegated powers to force one or more States into the Union, or to force them to remain in the Union, when they had once entered it; . . . there must be reserved to the States and the people respectively, the *right* to remain in, and the right to go out, or to secede from the Union peaceably, when they shall consider that the Union no longer establishes justice, no longer ensures domestic tranquility, nor provides for the common defence, nor for the general welfare, and that it has ceased to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.⁵³

On historical grounds also southern Catholics justified secession. The Hartford Convention was too eloquent an event to mistake New England's doctrine on the right of withdrawal. Again the Democrats in every presidential convention since Van Buren had endorsed the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions which guaranteed to each party of the confederation the equal

⁵¹ *Mirror*, Nov. 17, 1860.

⁵² *Miscellany*, Nov. 24, 1860, quoted in *Herald*, Dec. 22, 1860. See also *Miscellany* quoted in *Mirror*, Dec. 29, 1860; *Mirror*, Feb. 2, Sept. 14, Oct. 19, 1861; *Herald*, Oct. 20, Nov. 24, 1860.

⁵³ *Herald*, Nov. 24, 1860. See also Dec. 1, 22, 29, 1860. *Mirror*, Nov. 24, 1860, March 23, June 15, 1861.

right to judge of infractions of the Constitution as well as the mode and measure of redress. State rights and state sovereignty had been perennially maintained. Finally the Missouri Compromise had been a concession for the preservation of peace and the Union.⁵⁴

Furthermore some southern Catholics undertook to refute two arguments adduced by northern confreres. The first maintained that the Constitution was the supreme law of the land, anything in the Constitution or laws of any state to the contrary notwithstanding. The South replied that secession was something more than a law, and by quoting the article of the Constitution emphasized that judges were to be bound, not the people or state conventions. Secondly, the North argued that the states no more than individuals could resume the powers delegated to the government. The South replied simply by pointing out that merchants, employers, bishops, and popes had delegated powers and had resumed them; and again by branding as "false and dangerous" the theory that individuals delegated powers to governments.⁵⁵

It was to be expected, in view of the general editorial refutation of the northern Catholic press, that the ideas on sovereignty expressed by Abbé Perché of New Orleans would scarcely meet with northern approval. Catholics of New Orleans had asked the abbé if they could secede and maintain their position by arms. The answer made it not only a right in conscience but in this case an obligation. The *United States Catholic Miscellany* had hailed it as a most satisfactory answer, but the *Catholic* asserted Perché had no right to make theology responsible for his opinions. An editor "may give his own views on questions of conscience, if he thinks it necessary or prudent, but every Catholic knows that the proper ecclesiastical authority has alone the right to decide questions of such magnitude as are involved in the present secession movement." The *Freeman's Journal* concluded that the venerable abbé decided nothing.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ *Mirror*, Nov. 9, Nov. 23, Dec. 21, 1861; *Herald*, Nov. 24, Dec. 29, 1860.

⁵⁵ *Mirror*, Nov. 9, 1861, Dec. 21, 1861.

⁵⁶ *Catholic*, Feb. 23, 1861; *Miscellany* quoted in the *Mirror*, Dec. 29, 1860; *Freeman's Journal* quoted in *Catholic*, Feb. 23, 1861.

To the constitutional arguments of the South, the North replied in kind: secession must be a state act, made by state law; but the Constitution is the supreme law of the land, all state laws to the contrary notwithstanding; therefore, secession is null and void. The *Tablet* added: "As to the seeming conflict of jurisdiction over individual citizens between the Federal and State governments, it is only those who will not see straight or want to befog others who find difficulty in the matter."⁵⁷ The arguments on state sovereignty and the compact theory of the Constitution met like objections from northern Catholics. Sovereignty was properly speaking supreme power. With the Constitution the supreme law of the land, the *Freeman's Journal* asked: "Where, when, is *sovereignty*? If sovereignty is *supreme power*, where is supreme power, except in a supreme law, which is by declaration and acceptance the Constitutional law of the United States?"⁵⁸

Again the North was inclined to stress the mutual side of the compact theory. Granting that the Union was a constitutional compact, its nature was of that kind that "the parties are bound to each and each to all." Consequently its dissolution could be brought about only unanimously, "while from its very nature the parties remaining faithful to it must necessarily have the right to enforce its observance upon any party seeking to evade its provisions."⁵⁹ As the Constitution had been adopted by the common consent of all the sovereign powers, no state had a right to secede except as provided in that document itself. But as secession was not provided for by the Constitution, it could only peaceably be effected by an amendment. Thus for a dissolution of the compact a unanimous decision of the parties was required, while for peaceful secession, at least an amendment was demanded.⁶⁰

The North also argued from history, denying that the Hartford Convention had taught secession, but if it had then it had been preaching revolution. Jackson's declaration on nullification

⁵⁷ *Tablet*, Jan. 26, 1861. See also *Brownson's*, July, 1861; *Mirror*, Oct. 12, 1861, Nov. 2, 1861.

⁵⁸ *Freeman's Journal* quoted in *Catholic*, Feb. 23, 1861.

⁵⁹ *Brownson's*, July 1861.

⁶⁰ *Tablet*, March 16, Sept. 14, 1861; Archbishop Hughes in *Tablet*, Sept. 14, 1861.

was a powerful weapon on which to rely. Again it was said that the Constitution was to form a more perfect union than one which was to be perpetual. The fathers never imagined that the Constitution would be so interpreted as to permit any state to "discharge her people from all or any of their Federal obligations." Even the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions did not give the right of secession, and, in refutation to a southern claim, they had not been adopted by the Democratic platform until 1852.⁶¹ The final constitutional argument of the North was the reduction of the doctrine of secession *ad absurdum*:

If States shall be allowed, in face of that Federal Constitution, to kick over the traces of a common union, as agreed upon in the primitive days of our Government, then it is difficult to see why counties and townships and villages may not be at liberty to do the same thing just as often as the freak of fancy to do so may or shall have come upon them.⁶²

Indeed the states had no more rights than individuals to secede from the Union.

This comparison of the individual and the state in their respective rights of secession depended on a much more fundamental problem, whether secession was revolutionary or not. If the state was to the central government as the individual was to the state then secession takes on a revolutionary character. But the revolutionary character of secession depended on the still more fundamental problem: the principles, establishment, and power of a civil government and the right of revolution. The power of an established government, as all power, comes to it from God, not directly but through the people. Having decided the form of government, "they hand over the authority they have chosen . . . the power delivered to them by God."⁶³ Thus resistance to an ordinance of the legitimate government is resistance to an ordinance of God, for legitimate government holds its power from God.

But this power of government is restricted by certain limits: it is to be used for the good of the governed. When not so used

⁶¹ *Tablet*, Dec. 15, 1860, March 16, 1861; *Mirror*, Dec. 7, 1861.

⁶² Archbishop Hughes in *Tablet*, Sept. 14, 1861. See also, *Brownson's*, July 1861; *Mirror*, Nov. 2, Dec. 7, 1861; *Tablet*, Aug. 31, 1861.

⁶³ *Catholic*, Dec. 10, 1861. See also *Mirror*, Dec. 7, 1861; *Tablet*, March 2, 1861; *Metropolitan Record*, April 7, 1860.

this power is forfeited. Thus when the government becomes tyrannical, the people, again as agents of God, can overthrow it. But revolution is not to be undertaken without serious cause:

It is only allowable, when all legal means of redress have been exhausted, when oppression has reached such a point that the ends of civil government are no longer attained; and, even then, it must have the consent of the people, and be directed by public authority framed by them.⁶⁴

Northern Catholic spokesmen asserted that a legitimate government had been established. In forming the Federal Union the people did not form a mere league of confederation of sovereigns; "they formed a government, a government with limited powers indeed, but still a government, supreme, sovereign within its constitutional limits." Whether this government derived its powers from sovereign states or directly from the people politically divided into states "it is within its constitutional sphere, a government with all the rights and immunities of government."⁶⁵ Finally "there can be no dispute about this cardinal fact that the only government which represents the United States in the year 1861 is the government of President Lincoln."⁶⁶ Consequently the secession movement was not merely a constitutional question. "We do not design to consider the right upon which this movement is based. Its exercise implies revolution; and profound must be the exigency which invokes it."⁶⁷ Secession, then, is "neither more nor less than Revolution."⁶⁸

Since in northern Catholic opinion secession was revolution, the constitutionally elected president was bound by oath to prevent overthrow of the government. The Catholic citizen on his part was bound to adhere to the Union. More vitally, since a legitimate government exercised power ordained by God, there could be no Catholic indifference. Rebellion against a legitimate government becomes not only a crime but a sin. Thus also "any

⁶⁴ The Rev. James Keogh, *Catholic Principles of Civil Government*, p. 16.

⁶⁵ *Brownson's*, July 1861.

⁶⁶ *Tablet*, Nov. 30, 1861. See also *Catholic*, Jan. 5, Aug. 31, 1861.

⁶⁷ *Mirror*, Nov. 17, 1860. This is strange coming from the *Mirror*. The date is significant; South Carolina did not pass its ordinance until Dec. 20.

⁶⁸ *Tablet*, Dec. 15, 1860. See also *Freeman's Journal* quoted in *Pilot*, Nov. 17, 1860.

aggression by individuals or bodies not recognized by the laws, from which the loss of life may follow, is an act of murder, of which everyone engaged in such aggression is guilty."⁶⁹ The final consequence of this argument on the revolutionary character of secession was the duty of priests to inculcate obedience to the government.⁷⁰

Since a government had been established, it remained for the North to prove that the South had no justification for its "rebellion." And the North was vehement in its declarations. Brownson said: "There never was a more causeless rebellion, one more unprovoked, more unjustifiable, or more guilty. There is not one word to be said in defence or in extenuation of the actors in this foul conspiracy."⁷¹ The *Tablet* added, "if ever a people rebelled without cause it was these Southern neighbors of ours."⁷²

The rebellion was unjustified, because "The South have had no wrongs from the Government, and no grievances from the North to complain of."⁷³ The tariff originated with southern statesmen. The personal liberty laws were passed chiefly in retaliation for the laws of the southern states against free negroes. Moreover these personal liberty laws never prevented the return of fugitive slaves. No state was bound to that office; rather "the Federal government has never failed to discharge it."⁷⁴ Again such bills were unconstitutional and had never been adopted by the federal government. Indeed the South was considered to have had all the advantages. It ruled congress and the supreme court. It had controlled the administration and shaped its poli-

⁶⁹ Archbishop Kenrick in *Tablet*, June 1, 1861. This statement on "aggression as murder" can apply to either party; from the circumstances, however, it seems to apply more to the Union forces which in Missouri because of their deposition of the Governor were considered by some illegal.

⁷⁰ *Telegraph* quoted in *Tablet*, Feb. 9, 1861. See also Archbishop Hughes in *Tablet*, Sept. 14, 1861; *Catholic*, Aug. 17, 1861; *Tablet*, Nov. 17, 1860; *Catholic*, Aug. 10, Dec. 7, 1861; *Brownson's*, Oct. 1861.

⁷¹ *Brownson's*, July 1861. Brownson ten years earlier thought the South was being forced from the Union by the Freesoilers, *Brownson's*, July 1851.

⁷² *Tablet*, Oct. 26, 1861. See also *Catholic*, Jan. 5, 1861; *Brownson's*, Oct. 1861; Archbishop Purcell in *Chillicothe Advertiser*, Oct. 25, quoted in *Mirror*, Nov. 16, 1861; *Telegraph* quoted in *Mirror*, April 13, 1861; *Mirror*, Nov. 16, 1861.

⁷³ *Brownson's*, July 1861.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

cy, and wielded its patronage "with hardly an interval of time, since the inauguration of Mr. Jefferson in 1802."⁷⁵ It was considered by the *Tablet* the "spoiled and petted darling of the Confederacy."⁷⁶ Indeed, said Brownson, "If any party, then, could complain of wrongs, it is not the South, but the North."⁷⁷

In the election of Lincoln the South could find no cause for secession, because, as the *Tablet* said, "the principle that the majority shall rule is the fundamental basis of our institutions" and since Lincoln had been constitutionally elected, it was the obligation of every citizen "to obey the will, the registered and the legitimate and constitutionally expressed will of the majority." The late presidential election "has been held in conformity with the Constitution, and therefore cannot justify a revolution to destroy that very instrument."⁷⁸ Lincoln could do nothing of himself to injure southern interests; he was hemmed in by an opposition majority of eight senators and twenty-two representatives. Further the supreme court gave additional security for the conservation of all political rights. Finally the internal antagonism of the Republican party would so paralyze Lincoln's action as to "render harmless any mischievous propensities he might feel called on to indulge in."⁷⁹

Even if there were cause for complaint, it was considered necessary for the justification of revolution that all legal means of redress be first exhausted. This South Carolina could not claim to have done. Besides the secession movement had an unpleasant aristocratic flavor. Archbishop Hughes maintained that, "The people . . . had scarcely been consulted on this vital question;"⁸⁰ and the *Tablet* added that, "wherever universal suffrage was fairly allowed to work, Secession was voted down."⁸¹ Indeed "the men

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Tablet*, Oct. 26, 1861.

⁷⁷ *Brownson's*, July 1861. See also *Telegraph* quoted in the *Catholic*, June 22, 1861; p. 131; *Tablet*, Dec. 28, 1861; Archbishop Hughes in *Metropolitan Record* quoted in *Tablet*, Sept. 14, 1861.

⁷⁸ *Tablet*, Sept. 8, Dec. 15, 1860, Sept. 21, 1861.

⁷⁹ *Mirror*, Nov. 17, 1860. See also *Tablet*, Nov. 17, 1860, Oct. 12, 1861; Archbishop Hughes in *Metropolitan Record* quoted in the *Tablet*, Sept. 14, 1861; *Pilot*, Oct. 27, 1860, Nov. 17, 1861; *Catholic*, Nov. 24, 1860.

⁸⁰ *Metropolitan Record* quoted in *Tablet*, Sept. 14, 1861.

⁸¹ *Tablet*, May 11, 1861.

who are at the head of this rebellion are an aristocratic minority who consider that all the honors of public station, all the emoluments of office are theirs by hereditary right."⁸²

The South on its part laid claim to justification for its action, whether it was deemed revolution or simply secession, and the reasons advanced found liberal support, not always with the further implication of justification, in the North. To the principles of civil government advanced by the North, the South added fundamental corollary: "the people of every organized community—having due regard only to existing contracts—have the right to choose, to alter [sic,] to change their political government as they will."⁸³ Thus "all communities have the right of self-government; and . . . the several States are communities."⁸⁴ The South also appealed to its very realistic sufferings. Its people were "tired of the perpetual insults which have been heaped upon them by the miserable vagabonds, who have gained their living in the North by becoming the common sewers of the fanaticism of a large number of people of the North."⁸⁵ While regretting the dissolution of the Union, the South would not preserve it at the expense of justice. In the words of Bishop John Quinlan of Mobile, "Better that the instrument of confederation should be rent in pieces and scattered to the winds than that it should become a cloak for malice or a bond of iniquity."⁸⁶ The enforcement of the Constitution was said to have been resisted by the North; personal liberty laws, the underground railroad, John Brown and his subsequent glorification, all added to the burden. Indeed, there could be little question of the violated rights of the South by

⁸² *Tablet*, April 27, 1861. See also June 22, July 27, Aug. 10, Sept. 14, 1861 (one wonders how much its Irish audience had to do with this); *Catholic*, Dec. 29, 1860, Jan. 5, 1861. Brownson on the other hand rejoiced in the aristocracy of slavery free from the modern curse of universal suffrage; notice, however, the date: *Brownson's*, July 1860.

⁸³ *Freeman's Journal* quoted in *Guardian*, Feb. 9, 1861. This passage seems to refer principally to the people's right to settle the slavery question. It does not fit into that context however. See also O. A. Lochrane in the *Atlanta Southern Confederacy* quoted in *Mirror*, June 22, 1861.

⁸⁴ *Telegraph* quoted in *Mirror*, April 13, 1861.

⁸⁵ *Pilot*, Dec. 29, 1860. See also *Mirror*, July 6, 1861; Archbishop Hughes in *Metropolitan Record* quoted in *Tablet*, Sept. 14, 1861.

⁸⁶ *Standard* quoted in *Miscellany*, March 2, 1861. See also *Telegraph* quoted in *Catholic*, May 4, 1861; *Pilot*, Nov. 3, Dec. 8, 1860; *Mirror*, Oct. 19, 1861; *Miscellany*, Dec. 8, 1860.

"those Northern States who have nullified and treated with more than contempt the constitutional laws enacted by Congress for the preservation of Southern property." The insolence of the North had been beyond measure.⁸⁷

The South was not worried so much over the election of Lincoln; it was what Lincoln stood for. The policy of his party was considered to threaten the Union. The South believed that Republican tenets were dangerous to the peace of the whole country; they disliked the Republicans' sectionalism and their trespassing upon the rights of a large body of citizens, rights guaranteed by the common compact among all the states. To the argument that the Republican party was not aggressive, the *Mirror* replied,

can you tell us that men who have been, from press, *pulpit*, and rostrum, preaching up "irrepressible conflict"—who have been, and who still are, sending deadly weapons to bands of robbers, their emissaries, in Kansas—who encouraged the John Brown raid, and made a martyr of this executed criminal when he had wantonly slain peaceful citizens of the State of Virginia—who, by secret emissaries, have been fomenting rebellion among the slaves in every Southern State, encouraging these deluded and, but recently, happy and contented creatures to massacre their masters and their helpless families—can you tell us, we say, that men who have done all this, and much more, are of a party which is not aggressive?⁸⁸

This aggressiveness of the Republican party and what it portended for the South was advanced by Southern Catholic opinion as cause for secession. Southern uneasiness sprang from reasonable apprehension that it could not much longer resist in safety the pressure of Northern antagonism to its social institutions, that these institutions must finally be broken up, and that the political power of the country would be wielded in the exclusive interests of Northern abolitionists. It was maintained that many reasons could be found in the past action and present attitude of the North to give the argument color, cogency, and

⁸⁷ *Herald*, Dec. 1, 1860. See also *Guardian*, Feb. 23, 1861; *Pilot*, Feb. 4, Nov. 17, Dec. 1, 22, 1860.

⁸⁸ *Mirror*, Dec. 1, 1860. See also *Miscellany*, Dec. 8, 1860; *Mirror*, Nov. 3, 1860. Even Brownson felt that the success of the Republicans would be the open door for political abolitionism: *Brownson's*, July 1860.

force, in the minds of those who honestly believed that their honor and property were unrelentingly assailed:

The Statute books of many Northern States show implacable hostility to Southern institutions. The ravings of "mad theorists" from pulpit and rostrum permeate the public mind, and direct it towards "irrepressible conflict", which can terminate only in the destruction of Southern prosperity. The torch of the incendiary and the murderous raid of the felon, engender apprehension, provoke retaliation, and unsettle hopes of constitutional equality and protection.⁸⁹

As the northern states had made the Constitution a mere rope of sand, there was no longer peace or security for the southern states in a common household. As Bishop Patrick N. Lynch of Charleston, S. C., remarked:

what could the South do but consult its own safety by withdrawing from the Union? What other protection had they? The Senate, which had still a Democratic majority?—They had seen the House of Representatives pass into the hands of their enemies, and each session saw an increasing majority there. The executive had gone for four years. Their own majority in the Senate was dwindling fast, while on the territorial question, not a few of the Northern Democrats were unsound. To the Supreme Court?—That had spoken in the Dred Scott decision. But even the Democratic party in convention would not sustain it, and the Black Republicans scouted it; and moreover, in a few years, President Lincoln would have the privilege of placing on the Bench new Judges from the ranks of his party. To the sober second thought of the people?—But this was no new issue on which they were taken by surprise. For years and years it had been discussed; North and South it had been denounced as fraught with disunion and ruin; and yet the Northern people had gradually come to accept it.⁹⁰

South Carolina seceded and many hoped that in the seriousness of the situation something might be done. The committees in Congress proved their hopes vain. "The alternative was thus forced on the South either of tame submission or of resistance. They did not hesitate."⁹¹

⁸⁹ *Mirror*, Nov. 24, 1860.

⁹⁰ *Metropolitan Record* quoted in *Tablet*, Sept. 14, 1861.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

Thus on the question of legality and constitutionality of secession, as on the problem of its causes, Catholic opinion was divided: in the North secession was generally termed rebellion; in the South it was justified. While in Lowell, Massachusetts, the Irish Benevolent Society was toasting the "Federal Union" and "The Stars and Stripes," the Hibernian Society in Savannah, Georgia, was drinking the health of "President Jefferson Davis" and "The Confederate States." While Mulligan's Chicago Brigade "were sustaining with heroic courage the honor of the Irish name and the cause of true freedom,"⁹² an Irish brigade was raised in New Orleans to face New York's famous 69th and to show them the difference "between mere mercenaries and those fighting for their firesides and liberties."⁹³

⁹² *Tablet*, Oct. 5, 1861. See also *Tablet*, March 30, April 6, 1861.

⁹³ Montgomery *Advertiser* quoted in *Mirror*, May 17, 1861. See also *Western Banner* and *Pilot* quoted in *Tablet*, April 13, 1861; *Pilot*, Jan. 7, Dec. 29, 1860; *Mirror*, March 24, 1860; *Tablet*, May 4, 1861.

PARISH IN ARMS: A STUDY OF FATHER JOHN
MACKENNA AND THE MOHAWK VALLEY
LOYALISTS, 1773-1778

BY RICHARD K. MACMASTER, S.J.*

IN THE American Revolution, really in part a civil war, when neighbors separated into two menacing armies and in some colonies religious antagonism added fuel to the fires of nationalism, the clergy were, from the first years of the conflict, among the most active partisans of Crown or Congress. Ministers exerted their influence to raise volunteers and sometimes marched away with their companies.¹ An appointment as chaplain was no longer a sinecure to be satisfied by a sermon on the militia's annual "Training Day," but grew naturally out of local ties between pastor and congregation. When the parish was in arms, the pastor must follow or take the lead.

The loyalist chaplains, too, followed their flocks to war. When loyalist farmers who had swung a musket over their shoulders and trudged down from the Hudson highlands or the sandhills of Carolina produced their tattered commissions or were mustered into regiments, they looked to their old militia colonels and landlords for their leaders and to their refugee pastors for their chaplains. Thus, John Beardsley, rector of the Anglican churches at Poughkeepsie and Fishkill before the war, was appointed to a regiment commanded by a warden of his parish and officered by several of its vestrymen,² and John Bethune, of the Church of Scotland, served in the loyal militia and later in the 84th Royal Highland Emigrants with many of the Highlanders who had emigrated with him from Skye to North Carolina.³ Similar bonds united other chaplains to the men of their regiments.

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¹ William Warren Sweet, *The Story of Religion in America* (New York, 1950), p. 177. See Charles H. Metzger, S.J., "Chaplains in the American Revolution," *Catholic Historical Review*, XXI (1945), 31-79.

² Lorenzo Sabine, *Biographical Sketches of Loyalists of the American Revolution* (Boston, 1864), I, 222-223.

³ *Ibid.*, 227. See A. H. Young, "The Bethunes," *Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records*, XXVII (1931), 553-574.

The loyalist clergy were by no means apathetic to the revolution surging around them. Some had defended the British government in pamphlets and articles long before the first muskets rattled at Lexington.⁴ When war came, some ministers urged their congregations to take the king's shilling rather than drill for Congress and a few did a brisk trade in suborning patriot officers and gathering information on rebel plans.⁵ Nonetheless, fined, imprisoned and submitted to the inquisitional system of the Committees of Safety, the loyalist clergy had far less influence than their rebellious confreres. It was only on the frontier, where the loyalist element was stronger and had fewer natural leaders, that the clergy were called upon to play an active role for King and Country. Among them, few were so successful as a young Catholic priest of Irish birth, John MacKenna of Johnstown, New York, who could later boast of his Scottish and Irish parishioners that "not one of them took any part with the Americans."⁶ As recruiting agent, secret emissary, and regimental chaplain, Father MacKenna faithfully served the Crown, while his Catholic Scots of the Mohawk Valley "did in good earnest appear to the Interests of the Mother Country holding out with Arms that part of the country for his Majesty in anxious hopes of support until the month of January 1776 when they were overpowered by ten times their number."⁷

The motives that made loyalists of Father MacKenna's frontier parishioners and, generally speaking, of all the Scottish pioneers from Nova Scotia to Georgia have never been fully explained. Many of them had risen against George II thirty years before, but now they were staunch supporters of his grandson.⁸ Some

⁴ Philip Davidson, *Propaganda and the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, 1941), pp. 249 ff.

⁵ Robert O. DeMond, *The Loyalists in North Carolina during the American Revolution* (Durham, 1940), pp. 66-67; Carl VanDoren, *Secret History of the American Revolution* (New York, 1941), pp. 132-133.

⁶ American Loyalist Transcripts, MS. Division, New York Public Library, vol. 45, p. 403.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 395-396.

⁸ Of the leading Scottish Tories in Johnstown, all had fought in the 1745 rebellion, two had been wounded at Culloden, and one had married the widow of a Scot executed for treason. W. L. Scott, "A U. E. Loyalist Family," *Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records*, XXXII (1937), 140-170.

have suggested that as recent immigrants for the most part, they could have had little feeling for American grievances. Yet Gage complained more than once that fresh immigrants were no sooner landed, than they were mustered into Washington's army.⁹ Perhaps their natural conservatism, expressed by that very loyalty to the Stuarts, had something to do with it. The most probable reason seems to be that many of them were themselves old soldiers or had kinsmen in the Highland regiments, and as one Scot put it, "having a Brother & other near Relations in the King's Forces, I could not bear Arms against them." Added to this was the fact that many of the Highlanders had emigrated as groups and settled together, keeping their own language and customs, so that a single active loyalist could, and did, bring a hundred clansmen into the Tory camp.¹⁰ Moreover, long-standing grievances against prominent rebels, like the "war" between Colonel John Reid's Scots and Ethan Allen's Yankees over a Vermont claim, made it certain they would not serve together in any cause.¹¹ Whatever his personal reasons may have been, and he left no record of them, by the autumn of 1774 Father John MacKenna and the four or five hundred Celts who worshipped with him were bound by oath to fight for the British cause.¹²

Father MacKenna's close-knit, hard-fighting parish was not the only settlement on the New York frontier to display a fierce loyalty to King and Country. When war finally came, Scottish settlers from the Champlain Valley to the Susquehanna were ready to dispute the right of Sam Adams' Boston mob to make their decisions for them. There were Germans, too, descendants of the old Palatine settlers and more recent emigrants from Hanover, Englishmen, Irishmen, and Yankees, traders, squatters and crown officials, but mostly small farmers. By far the most important in numbers and singleness of purpose were the Scots.¹³

⁹ Gage to Dartmouth, September 20, 1775. Clarence E. Carter, ed., *The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage with the Secretaries of State 1763-1775* (New Haven, 1931), I, 414.

¹⁰ DeMond, *Loyalists*, pp. 55 ff; A. B. Warburton, *A History of Prince Edward Island* (St. John's, 1923), pp. 169-170.

¹¹ Edward P. Alexander, *A Revolutionary Conservative* (New York, 1938), pp. 81-82 and 82 n.

¹² *The Letter Book of Captain Alexander McDonald, 1775-1779*, *New York Historical Society Collections*, XV (1881), pp. 223 ff.

¹³ Based on a study of 138 claims of Tryon County Loyalists in

The Scottish emigration to America began on a large scale only after the French and Indian War, but by 1773 the tide was running at flood. The Scottish newspapers were full of sailings for America and when Dr. Johnson made his tour to the Hebrides, he heard talk of "the present rage for emigration" on every side.¹⁴ Some left that summer for Prince Edward Island¹⁵ and others for Nova Scotia,¹⁶ while whole parishes found new homes in North Carolina, the goal of most of the emigrants.¹⁷ They came to New York, too, that summer. William Smith, the historian, wrote to Philip Schuyler in July that "the streets are filled with Scotch immigrants."¹⁸ To the Reverend William Thom, whose *Seasonable Advice to the Land-Holders and Farmers in Scotland* had encouraged many Scots to sail for the colonies, Smith gave a glowing picture of his countrymen's progress.

I am fully convinced from your Representations of the State of the Scotch Tenantry, that you are doing a good Office to Humanity in shewing the Distressed the Way to America; & they & their Posterity will have reason to bless you. They spread all over this Province, as best suits them, but the greater Number collect together & are forming a New Scotland in the District between Hudson's River the Lakes George & Champlaine and the Northern Part of the River Connecticut, where there is Room for several Millions of Inhabitants, who by the common Blessing of Heaven upon their Industry, may soon live comfortably, and by the Improvement of their Lands grow rich. Those who have means purchase Farms at the Rate of a Dollar per Acre, and sometimes cheaper; and the poorest Sort may acquire Lands in Fee simple rendring a Rent of six or seven Pence sterling per Acre.¹⁹

Second Report of the Bureau of Archives of the Province of Ontario (Toronto, 1905).

¹⁴ James Boswell, *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* (New York, 1936), p. 132.

¹⁵ Ada MacLeod, "The Glenaladale Pioneers," *Dalhousie Review*, XI (1931), 311-324.

¹⁶ J. L. MacDougall, *A History of Inverness County, Nova Scotia* (Truro, 1922), *passim*.

¹⁷ DeMond, *Loyalists*, p. 56. See Ian Graham, *Colonists from Scotland* (Ithaca, 1956), *passim*.

¹⁸ Smith to Schuyler, July 19, 1773. Schuyler Papers, MS. Division, N.Y. Public Library.

¹⁹ William H. W. Sabine, ed., *Historical Memoirs from 16 March 1763 to 9 July 1776 of William Smith* (New York, 1956), pp. 198-200 and 198 n.

Among those who must have watched the would-be emigrants as they traveled past his chapel on their way to Fort William was the Catholic pastor at Badenoch and Lochaber, Inverness-shire, Father John MacKenna. Born in County Meath in 1743, the son of farmer Michael MacKenna was no Scotsman, but since he had been educated for the Scottish Mission and ordained in Scotland in 1768, the problems of Scottish Catholics were his own.²⁰ The Catholic districts of the Highlands were sending their sons and daughters over the seas, too. When the Laird of Boisdale ordered the mass eviction of his Catholic tenants in 1770, unless they followed him into the Presbyterian fold, emigration had been the only solution. Even so, many who sailed with the dispossessed crofters in 1772 were from the mainland, poverty their only persecutor.²¹ With only one Gaelic-speaking priest in all America, it was a matter of concern to the bishops that "Our Highland Catholics leave us in great numbers." Priests had to be found to cross the ocean with them.²²

Before the summer was out, a priest had been found, and Father John MacKenna, "a man of gigantic stature and prodigious strength," well suited to be a pioneer, had his parish in a group of emigrants from Glengarry.²³

Your Memorialist who is an Irish Roman Catholic Priest tog^r. with 300 Scotch and Irish Emigrants of the Same persuasion Embarked in the year 1773 at Fort W^m. in Scotland and settled at Johnstown on the Moh^k. River in New York under the protection of S^r. W^m. Johnson then Superintendent of Indian Affairs there.²⁴

Making Albany their headquarters, they investigated various offers and decided to accept that made by Sir William Johnson, but not without some shrewd bargaining.²⁵ Sir William agreed to the terms, and the new settlers acquired in fee simple tracts

²⁰ Edward Kelly, "The Reverend John McKenna, Loyalist Chaplain," *Canadian Catholic Historical Association Report*, 1933, pp. 31-44.

²¹ MacLeod, "Glenaladale Pioneers," pp. 315-316 and 320.

²² Ewen J. MacDonald, "Father Roderick MacDonell, Missionary at St. Regis and the Glengarry Catholics," *Catholic Historical Review*, XIX (1933), 265-274.

²³ Kelly, "McKenna," p. 31.

²⁴ American Loyalist Transcripts, vol. 45, p. 395.

²⁵ Flick, Sullivan, *et al.*, eds., *The Papers of Sir William Johnson* (Albany, 1933), VIII, 915-917.

averaging from 50 to 100 acres, generally with no more than an acre or two cleared of forest, along with household goods and farm implements as part of the bargain. Some of the wealthier settlers purchased outright as many as 500 acres. Father MacKenna, also, "in the quality of a Clergyman to the party settled with them at Johnstown," had a promise "from the Emigrants to be allowed £46 Ster. per Ann. besides a house and a promise of 100 Acres of Land."²⁶

When the patriots of New England began to organize into groups like the Sons of Liberty and, still later, the Committees of Safety, Major Allan MacLean and others independently came to the conclusion that the Scottish settlers, especially in New York and North Carolina, where they might match the avowed rebels in strength, could be organized on a similar scale as loyal citizens of the common empire. MacLean made the proposal to Lord Dartmouth in 1774 that,

the Associations then beginning to be formed by the Rebels might receive a very Effectual check by engaging proper persons who had influence among the aforesaid Emigrants to form Counter-Associations which, with the assistance of the Loyal part of the Natives and both being properly supported by His Majesty's Governors and Commanders might, if adopted in time, produce very salutary Effects without having recourse to Arms.²⁷

If this plan were to succeed the cooperation of the numerous Scots on the New York frontier would be essential. The man chosen to win their support was Alexander MacDonald, a retired army captain, then living on Staten Island. MacDonald was a fiery loyalist and as early as the Stamp Act troubles in 1765 had offered his services to General Gage "when it was apprehended that Military force was required to inforce the Stamp Act."²⁸

Through that winter events were moving too quickly for these few loyalists to stem the tide. MacDonald himself had to admit:

²⁶ American Loyalist Transcripts, vol. 45, pp. 403 and 405.

²⁷ Ernest A. Cruikshank, "The King's Royal Regiment of New York," *Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records*, XXVII (1931), 198.

²⁸ *MacDonald Letter Book*, p. 223. American Loyalist Transcripts, vol. 45, pp. 72 ff.

In this Circuit of About Six or Seven Hundred Miles I found the Spirit of Rebellion and Treason blasing every where. The People constantly exercising themselves to Arms, Liberty Poles erected Almost at every Mile end, but at the same time I met with Many Attached to Government, tho but few in Comparison.²⁹

Among these latter was Father John MacKenna, who "on the commencement of the Troubles did his endeavours to keep the people strict to their adherence to Great Britain."³⁰ Captain MacDonald was at Johnstown in December 1774 and succeeded in enlisting "two hundred Men of my own Name, who had fled from the Severity of their Landlords in the Highlands of Scotland, the Leading men of whom most cheerfully agreed to be ready at a Call."³¹ From that time on, the task was in Father MacKenna's hands.

The action at Lexington Green changed the entire situation. It was no longer a question of out-talking and out-threatening the rebels "without having recourse to Arms," but of meeting them on the field of battle. With the lakes and the Hudson closed to them, New York loyalists continued to trickle into Boston in small numbers, but by May 1775 the Mohawk Valley Scots were effectively isolated. With the aid of the Johnsons and their dependents, nevertheless, they "did in good earnest appear to the Interests of the Mother Country."

Under such provocation, the Tryon County Committee of Safety appealed more than once to General Philip Schuyler, whose command embraced northern New York. When Colonel Guy Johnson left his home in what is now Amsterdam on May 14, 1775, with a group of Mohawks and "a body of armed White men making together about 250," among them a few Scots from Johnstown, the patriots howled for blood.³² In July 1775 the Albany militia were marched back from Saratoga when the Committee reported: "Col. Johnson was ready with eight or nine hundred Indians to make an invasion of the County, that the

²⁹ *MacDonald Letter Book*, p. 275.

³⁰ *American Loyalist Transcripts*, vol. 45, p. 403.

³¹ *MacDonald Letter Book*, p. 224.

³² J. Howard Hanson and Samuel L. Frey, eds., *The Minute Book of the Committee of Safety of Tryon County* (New York, 1905), pp. 7-8. Cruikshank, "Royal Regiment," pp. 195-197.

Indians were to be under the Command of Joseph Brant and Walter Butler and that they were to fall on the inhabitants below the little falls in order to divide the people in two parts."³³ Prophetic as it sounds, this was no more than a rumor. Nonetheless, in August the committee "resolved that a Memorial shall be sent to Major General Schuyler at Ticonderoga for a couple Companies Militia under his Command to secure our exposed frontiers."³⁴

Thus, it became increasingly evident as the summer wore on that the loyal inhabitants could not hold out by force of arms forever.

At British headquarters it was not expected or even desired that they would. Although delays and overconfidence had postponed it too long, Gage had begun a full-scale recruiting program by the close of May 1775. Among the regiments he was raising to strengthen the British force in Boston was Allan MacLean's Royal Highland Emigrants. Lord Dartmouth had written the General in April:

Lieutenant Colonel Allan Macleane, heretofore Major of the 114th Regiment of Foot, has made Proposals for engaging the many Emigrants from the North-West parts of No. Britain, now resident chiefly in New York & North Carolina, in such Association, to support the Authority of this Kingdom, as may lay the foundation for their being assembled in Arms on the Side of Government, if it should become necessary. . . . the Orders given to the Govrs. of New York & North Carolina, respecting Lieutenant Colonel Macleane, are inclosed, and it is His Majesty's Pleasure that you do, in case it shall become necessary to augment your Force, take the Proper Steps for carrying those Plans into Execution.³⁵

Although some of MacLean's agents were able to transport recruits to Boston, there was still a grave problem to be faced in mustering the Mohawk Valley Scots:

Lieutenant Colonel MacLean is here but returns immediately to the Southward to try if the Objects of his Mission can

³³ Hanson and Frey, *Minute Book*, p. 38. See Willis T. Hanson, *History of Schenectady During the Revolution* (Schenectady, 1916), p. 40.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

³⁵ Dartmouth to Gage, April 15, 1775. Carter, *Correspondence*, I, 193.

be accomplished. I am in hopes that General Carleton will be able to fix a Force on Lake Champlain, in which case it might be a Place of Rendez vous for such people as Colonel MacLean might raise in the New York Province, but I am ignorant of General Carleton's Situation, and know only that he must depend upon Canadians and Indians.³⁶

As it turned out, both doors to New York were left closed for more than a year. Meanwhile, MacLean continued his recruiting:

Lieutenant Colonel MacLean has sent officers to No. Carolina, the Province of Quebec and Nova Scotia and into several parts of New York to collect a number of Highlanders to form his Corps; but it is impossible to judge of the Success that may be expected, tho' there is a prospect of getting Men: and Methods are taken to assemble them in Bodys by different Routes.³⁷

A boatload of recruits was captured near Philadelphia and one of his agents in New York City was sent to prison in Connecticut, but, by and large, MacLean's plan succeeded. Soon after Bunker Hill, two Highland officers went to North Carolina in the guise of paroled prisoners of war and found most of the Scottish loyalists already under arms. Nearly all the Highlanders in Prince Edward Island and Cape Breton were enlisted and sailed for Halifax in August. Still, they were scattered far apart.³⁸

Lieutenant Colonel MacLean has taken Pains to raise his Corps of Highland Emigrants and posted Officers in many of the Provinces to collect them, but the great difficulty is to transport them to Canada where the Colonel has established his Head Quarters. He writes from thence that he has recruited one hundred Men at Quebec and had engaged four hundred more on the Mohock River, who waited their

³⁶ Gage to Dartmouth, June 12, 1775. *Ibid.*, I, 402.

³⁷ Gage to Dartmouth, July 24, 1775. *Ibid.*, I, 409.

³⁸ American Loyalist Transcripts, vol. 43, pp. 609 ff; vol. 45, pp. 72-73; MacDonald to MacLean, September 1, 1775, *Letter Book*, pp. 206-208; DeMond, *Loyalists*, p. 94; Thomas J. Wertenbaker, *Father Knickerbocker Rebels* (New York, 1948), p. 63; Alexander C. Flick, *Loyalism in New York* (New York, 1901), p. 101; Wilbur H. Siebert, *The Loyalists of Pennsylvania* (Columbus, 1920), p. 46.

Opportunity to get to Canada, which will not be easy as the Rebels have possessed themselves of Lake Champlain.³⁹

The man chosen to find a way to Canada for the Highland recruits and their families was Father John MacKenna.

In the summer of 1775 Allan MacLean made "many journeys from Philadelphia to New York and from thence to Canada in disguise."⁴⁰ In June 1775 he conferred with his recruits at Johnstown, probably the only time he was able to do so. He was at Montreal on July 17, 1775, and was actively engaged in Canada for the rest of the year. A loyalist officer declared that "Brigr. Genr. McLean came to his father's house near Schenectady in Company with Capt. Munro. The Genr. was in disguise wishing to get to Canada. Claimt. went with him to Sir John Johnston's House which was attended with some risk."⁴¹

On August 23, 1775, James Livingston wrote from Montreal to General Philip Schuyler: "Colo. McLean who arrived here with Colo. Johnson has orders to raise a Regiment of Canadians upon these terms. I can assure you from Three Rivers to Chambly he got not a single Man—I believe he got a few in and about the Subburbs of the Town of Montreal."⁴²

Since Guy Johnson reached Montreal on the 17th of July, it is unlikely that MacLean had any direct contact with the Mohawk Valley Scots during the summer of 1775. Left to themselves, the settlers at Johnstown turned to their parish priest:

I was settled prior to the American troubles as Clergyman to a Body of Highlanders & other Emigrants on Sir John Johnston's Estate—We all took Earnest & Active part in his Majesties cause Stood our ground with great exertion as loyal Subjects under various difficulties & sufferings, & at last in order to render our Services more Effectual it was

³⁹ Gage to Dartmouth, September 20, 1775. Carter, *Correspondence*, I, 414.

⁴⁰ Cruikshank, "Royal Regiment," p. 198.

⁴¹ Testimony of Captain Richard Duncan, late of King's Royal Regiment of New York, Montreal, March 5, 1788. *Second Report of the Bureau of Archives of the Province of Ontario* (Toronto, 1905), pp. 474-476. Captain John Munro gives the date as the spring of 1775. See his examination in James Sullivan, ed., *Minutes of the Albany Committee of Correspondence* (Albany, 1923), I, 227.

⁴² James Livingston to Philip Schuyler, August 23, 1775. Emmett Collection, MS. Division, N.Y. Public Library, #4315.

determined we should remove to Cannada when an Opportunity should offer, & I was, deputed by the Body, to go thither to bring an Account of our Situation & of the Events & Transactions in those parts, to his Excellency Gen^l. Carlton, & which I cheerfully & willingly & for the good of the Service undertook & performed, leaving all my property & effects behind; in which Journey, & in passing thro' bye and infrequented ways Woods & Loughs, for fear of detection, I suffered Dangers & hardships not to be related—& the information I brought, being the first of the Nature then received by Gen^l. Carlton was thought of some Advantage & benefit to his Majesties Cause—Soon afterwards the whole Body effectuated an Escape & made good their retreat to Join us at Montreal.⁴³

In the account of services that Father MacKenna gave to the Loyalist Claims Commissioners in 1787, he adds that he was “accompanied by two or three persons as Guides without any other Cloaths or provisions but what they could carry” and that their route was “over the Lakes.”⁴⁴ He arrived at last at Montreal and on October 20, 1775 the Vicar General of the Diocese of Quebec wrote to Bishop Briand:

There arrived in this city on Friday Mr. Mckenney the Irish priest chaplain of the Scots who were here two years ago, and who were going to settle in the back country of New York and Pennsylvania. Some of his flock, since the outbreak of the war, have offered their services to Mr. Gage. The others have been obliged to scatter. Their chaplain has come here to look for an asylum for them until the end of the war. He appeared before the General [Sir Guy Carleton] who received him with his usual kindness. I have had the honor to discuss his case with His Excellency who told me, that in accordance with his orders, if this priest had come to settle permanently in the Province, he would be unable to receive him: but that for a passing refugee there would not be the slightest difficulty, that he can appear publicly in clerical garb and perform the duties of his office. I do not expect to get any other privilege for him than to say Mass; he will not offer it publicly however nor wear the soutane without Your Grace's express permission.⁴⁵

⁴³ John MacKenna to General Frederick Haldimand, August 27, 1783. Haldimand Papers, Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa, B215.

⁴⁴ American Loyalist Transcripts, vol. 45, p. 396.

⁴⁵ The Rev. Etienne Montgolfier to the Most Rev. Joseph Briand,

If Father MacKenna hoped his wandering parish would soon rejoin him in Montreal, his plans were promptly foiled by another Irish emigrant, General Richard Montgomery. In his northward journey "over the Lakes," Father MacKenna had skirted Montgomery's army besieging St. John's and now on November 3, 1775, the little garrison, including eighteen of Allan MacLean's Royal Highland Emigrants, surrendered. In a week's time the invaders would be at the gates of Montreal.⁴⁶

The patriots and more than a thousand Canadians were soon advancing. The same day Montgomery reported his men were "going to wards the mouth of the Sorell & Pushing Col Allan McClean before them—McClean had many Canadians, but they joined thro fear of fire & Sword—You may easily judge how they will fight."⁴⁷ With the Yankees at his heels, Carleton fell back to Quebec: "the badness of the weather & worse roads have put it out of my power to get here before yesterday—a favourable wind the night before enabled Mr. Carleton to get away with his little garrison on board ten or eleven little vessels reserved for that purpose & to carry away the Powder & other important stores."⁴⁸

Under these circumstances, loyalist refugees had to shift for themselves. Father MacKenna settled down in the occupied city and busied himself with the pastoral care of the English-speaking Catholics of the neighborhood. As an old friend of Colonel Moses Hazen, the Yankee commandant, he was in no danger despite his avowed Tory principles.⁴⁹

Meanwhile, the situation on the Mohawk had steadily worsened. In December 1775 General Schuyler was ordered by Congress to disarm the loyalists in Johnstown and by January had assembled a force of militia from various colonies. Sir John Johnson was taken unawares. While Schuyler's men were on the road to their rendezvous in Albany, he sent one of the leaders of the Scottish

October 30, 1775. Archives of the Archdiocese of Quebec, Vicaires Généraux, V. 44. (Translation mine.)

⁴⁶ Schuyler Papers, N.Y. Public Library, #2008.

⁴⁷ Montgomery to Schuyler, November 3, 1775. *Ibid.*, #1443.

⁴⁸ Montgomery to Schuyler, November 12, 1775. *Ibid.*, #1445.

⁴⁹ Kelly, "McKenna," p. 38. The Rev. Pierre Floquet to Bishop Briand, June 19, 1776, Haldimand Papers, B215, Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa.

settlers to Governor Tryon for aid, although he well knew that Tryon himself was confined to the packet-ship *Duchess of Gordon*, unable to land in his own province since the 18th of October.⁵⁰

On January 13, 1776, Schuyler halted his troops sixteen miles west of Schenectady and invited Sir John to confer with him under a safe-conduct. When Johnson arrived, he was made a prisoner and forced to sign articles of capitulation, as was a representative of the Scottish settlers at Johnstown. Advancing to Johnson Hall, he received the surrender of three hundred Scottish militiamen. The whole campaign took a week's time and not a single life, yet it temporarily crushed resistance on the New York frontier:

The Scotch inhabitants of said County shall, without any kind of exception, immediately deliver all arms in their possession of what kind soever they may be; and they shall each solemnly promise that they will not at any time hereafter, during the continuance of this unhappy contest, take up arms without the permission of the Continental Congress, or of their General Officers; and for the faithful performance of this article, the General insists that they shall deliver up to him six hostages of his own nomination.⁵¹

Six of the most prominent members of Father MacKenna's parish were sent to prison in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, without any provision being made for their families. Three escaped a year later, but the others were not released until 1779.⁵²

Their troubles multiplied. On May 16, 1776, the Albany Committee,

recommended the most decisive measures to be pursued for frustrating the Plans w^h. Sir John Johnson in spite of his solemn Engagement is devising against the Peace of this Province and the general Liberties of America; more particularly when they take into Consideration our late Disappointment in the Province of Canada; the Account of w^h. probably might strengthen the Power of the Enemies to our Liberty, and tempt them to carry into immediate Execution

⁵⁰ Hanson, *Schenectady*, p. 48; Sabine, *Memoirs*, pp. 242 and 242 n; Cruikshank, "Royal Regiment," p. 199.

⁵¹ Cruikshank, "Royal Regiment," pp. 199-200.

⁵² Brother Alfred, F.S.C., *Catholic Pioneers in Upper Canada* (Toronto, 1947), pp. 4-7.

the Plots wh. appear to have been long formed for embroiling this Frontier Country in a civil Contest.⁵³

The arrest of the Johnstown loyalists was entrusted to a New Jersey militia regiment, but Johnson was given timely warning and when the troops reached Johnstown the men had followed Father MacKenna's trail to Canada.⁵⁴

A "long and dismal journey" of nearly a month over, Sir Guy Carleton was able to report to Lord George Germain in June 1776:

The day after His Majesty's Troops took possession of Montreal and the Communications with the upper Country thereby became open, Sir John Johnson and about two hundred followers arrived there from the province of New York. He represents to me that there are considerable numbers of people in the part of the country he comes from, who remain steadily attached to His Majesty's Government, and who would take up arms in its defence had they sufficient protection, on which account, in the mean time, they suffer all the miseries that the persecuting spirit of the Rebels is able to inflict upon them. In consequence of this representation, and taking it for granted that the King's good pleasure is, not only to furnish all his good and loyal subjects with the means of defending themselves against rapine and violence, but further to grant them all possible assistance, I have therefore given Sir John Johnson a Commission to raise on the frontier of this Province a Battalion of men (to be called the King's Royal Regiment of New York) of equal numbers with the other His Majesty's marching Regiments serving in America, and I have appointed him Lieutenant Colonel Commandant thereof.⁵⁵

So it was that Father MacKenna's fighting parish,

excited by his Example and Advice in sometime after, likewise made their Escape to Montreal and were formed into 2 Reg^{ts}. one called the Royal Highland Emigrants, the other the Royal Yorkers to both which Reg^{ts}. Memst. was app^d. Chaplain and at the desire of Gen^l. Carlton thereafter attended whatever British Irish Canadians and Foreigners were of his persuasion on the Exped^{ns}. under diff^t. Commanders from Canada.⁵⁶

⁵³ Sullivan, *Minutes*, I, 408.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 410.

⁵⁵ Cruikshank, "Royal Regiment," p. 201.

⁵⁶ American Loyalist Transcripts, vol. 45, p. 397.

Whether he was regularly commissioned or not, Father MacKenna was unquestionably the most active chaplain on the Canadian station. He celebrated Mass for his old parishioners, both soldiers and their families, now divided between Allan MacLean's camp and Sir John Johnson's, and for the Hessian troops scattered in camps along the St. Lawrence from Montreal to Three Rivers, "going from company to company preaching and confessing in German, which he spoke fluently."⁵⁷

I also for my part Exerted myself to be usefull in my way & by Sir Guy Carleton's directions Attended all the Souldiers of my persuasion whether Highlanders, Cannadians, or Germans, within the province of Cannada, & on the said Expeditions, Exhorting & Encouraging all to their duty, in some of which I was no inconsiderable sufferer, having lost & been plundered of my whole property. I had the happiness of receiving Sir Guy Carleton's approbation of my conduct & I beg leave to inclose to your Excellency a Copy of his Certificate & of the Orders of the German Officers—& he was pleased to allow me £150 a year—it being his Intention to Continue me in that Appointment—In this view he was so good to recommend me to your Excellency, & it was by your Excellency's order I received payment of my Sallery for the last year I was in Cannada.⁵⁸

Father MacKenna also marched along on the expeditions to the frontier end back to winter quarters, "and particularly that to Fort Stanwix under Lieut. Col. St. Leger where Memst. in common with others lost all his prop^y. and Baggage to the amount hereinafter set forth being obliged to abandon the same to the Enemy in making a retreat from thence."⁵⁹

The expedition that ended so ingloriously began with high hopes of success. Lt. Col. Barry St. Leger, commanding a relatively small force of regulars, with Sir John Johnson's Royal Yorkers and a number of Mohawk Indians, in all between eight and nine hundred men, marched overland from Fort Oswego on July 27, 1777. For many the march to the Mohawk was a glori-

⁵⁷ John G. Shea, *Life and Times of Most Rev. John Carroll* (New York, 1888), p. 143 n.

⁵⁸ MacKenna to Haldimand, August 27, 1783. Haldimand Papers, Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa, B215.

⁵⁹ American Loyalist Transcripts, vol. 45, p. 397.

ous homecoming. Not all of Father MacKenna's flock were there, but three of them were each in command of a company and the *Orderly Book* is full of Johnstown names.⁶⁰ After a long trek through the forests, they reached Fort Stanwix, newly christened Fort Schuyler, and besieged it on August 2, 1777, boldly parading redcoats and Indians before the raw militiamen. They met and decisively defeated a relief force at Oriskany on August 6. Father MacKenna wrote soon afterwards:

Reverend and dear Father, A short time ago we reached Fort Stanwix, which will soon, with God's help, be in our hands, as it is completely surrounded by the King's soldiers. On the seventh of this month, Sir John Johnson with eighty men of his own regiment and five hundred Indians encountered a thousand Yankees about three leagues from Fort Stanwix. Sir John was victorious. Two hundred Yankees were killed, among them their General Harkimar and many of his officers. Sir John lost only four officers, six soldiers and twenty Indians, thirty killed in all. Colonel St. Leger remains in command before Fort Stanwix. Roywell st ours, salebyry, vasal, Bazin and all the other Canadians are well. We are all in good spirits. It is extremely difficult for me to offer Mass every day because of the fighting but nothing is more important. With all respect I am Your Reverence's humble and obedient servant in Christ,

John MacKenna

Please give my regards to the Reverend Fathers at the Seminary and to Father Well. Only thirty Yankees were captured in the battle. I wrote so little because of the limited time.⁶¹

Final victory went to the Americans when a panic started among St. Leger's Indians, who made up all but 250 of his little army, and in the frantic retreat the baggage was looted by Mohawk and patriot alike. Father MacKenna lost his vestments, missal, and much personal property in the wild confusion.⁶²

⁶⁰ Cruikshank, "Royal Regiment," pp. 319-323; William L. Stone, ed., *The Orderly Book of Sir John Johnson During the Oriskany Campaign* (Albany, 1882), pp. 30, 56, 59, 60, 69.

⁶¹ MacKenna to Montgolfier, August —, 1777, in Peter Guilday, "Father John MacKenna: A Loyalist Catholic Priest," *Catholic World*, CXXXIII (1931), 24 n. (Translation mine.)

⁶² John R. Alden, *The American Revolution* (New York, 1954), pp. 136-140. There is a contemporary account in James Thacher, *The American Revolution . . . A Daily Journal* (Hartford, 1861), pp. 88-89.

After Burgoyne's surrender the King's Royal Regiment of New York and the Royal Highland Emigrants were both assigned to guard the gates of Canada. Father John MacKenna marched with them in the minor border forays of that year. His health was failing rapidly and late in 1778 he asked to be relieved of his duties:

The unaccustomed fatigues & hardships which I had felt & Endured on the many & various occasions alluded to, made it necessary for me to return for a while to my Native Country, for the re-establishment of my Health, & broken Constitution, & having Suggested such my wish & intention to your Excellency, you were humanely pleased to Consent to my return as was desired—Signifying at the same time that I might depend on a Continuation of my pay or Allowance.—At the time of my departure, it was my fixt determination to return to my duty as soon as my Health & other Circumstances would admit—but soon after my Arrival here I was seized with a dangerous tedious Fever contracted by the Fatigues Cold & hardships which I had suffered and undergone in America, & which in all appearances would have proved fatal, And Altho' it has been the pleasure of the Almighty to spare my life for that time & so prevent my becoming a Victim to it, yet the effect of that fever, considering the impaired State of my Health at the time I was seized with it, has ever since continued, so as to have made it impossible for me to attempt a return, or to have been of any further Service in any way, even had I done so—& by the uncertain & precarious State of my Health ever since, I have been unable to earn any provision for my Support, but have lived upon the Bounty of my Friends, to whom I am become an Incumbrance.⁶³

John MacKenna never returned to Canada. For about seven years he lived in great poverty at Balrath, Co. Meath, acting once his health permitted, as curate of the parish. His last years were spent as parish priest at Donaghmore and Kilbride in the Diocese of Meath, to which he was appointed in 1785. There death came on July 28, 1789, and his body was laid to rest beside his parents in his native parish. He was 46 years old and had been a priest for 21 years.⁶⁴

⁶³ MacKenna to Haldimand, August 27, 1783. Haldimand Papers, Public Archives of Canada, B215.

⁶⁴ Kelly "McKenna," p. 43; Guilday, "McKenna," p. 27.

Family and parish life had been resumed on the banks of the St. Lawrence long before. The vicar general of Quebec wrote of Father MacKenna's "wandering parish" as "about three hundred in number" in 1777. "They have already settled at Orange and intend to fix all together in the same place with their missionary who alone understands their language. [Highland Gaelic] I have given him the ordinary powers for ministering to his wandering parish."⁶⁵

A number of family men, besides "the female old and Infirm," had remained at Johnstown in 1776, many of them in dire want.⁶⁶ Eventually they all made the "long and dismal journey of between 5 and 600 miles" to rejoin their families in Canada:

Several other parties have come in and been disposed in the same way, and lately a body of near a hundred have come from the Province of New York with one Mr. McDonald, a captain in MacLean's Corps, who has been in that province all this time without having been able to get out of it before; part of his men are for the corps he belongs to and part are Volunteers for Sir John Johnson's.⁶⁷

Refugees from Johnstown continued to trickle in even after the war was over. Eventually all of the Mohawk Valley Scots found new homes in Glengarry and Stormont Counties in Ontario, and MacDonells, Grants, and MacPhersons from the Mohawk are there today.

Father MacKenna's wandering parish, settled at last, was not long without a pastor. In 1784 Father Roderick MacDonell, newly ordained at the Scots College in Rome, sailed to join his parents and kinsmen in Ontario. Two years later Father Alexander MacDonell came with some six hundred settlers.⁶⁸

Having laid before the King a memorial of Mr. Roderick MacDonell, stating that at the solicitation of a considerable number of Scots Highlanders, and other British Subjects of the Roman Catholick Persuasion, who, prior to the last war, were Inhabitants of the Back Settlements of the Province of

⁶⁵ Kelly, "McKenna," p. 37.

⁶⁶ Sullivan, *Minutes*, I, 400, 410; Helen MacDonell to Major Jellies Fonda, March 15, 1777, in Stone, *Orderly Book*, p. lxxxii.

⁶⁷ Carleton to Germain, May 27, 1777, in Cruikshank, "Royal Regiment," p. 206.

⁶⁸ Alfred, *Pioneers*, p. 170; MacDonald, "Roderick Macdonell," *passim*.

New York, and to whom in consideration of their Loyalty and services, Lands have been lately assigned in the higher parts of Canada, he is desirous of joining them in the capacity of a clergyman, in the humble hope that, on his arrival at their settlement he shall be allowed by Government an annual subsistence for the Discharge of that Duty. I enclose to you the said Memorial, and am to signify to you the King's Commands that you do permit Mr. MacDonell to join the aforementioned Settlers and officiate as their clergyman; and with respect to the allowance to be made to him, I shall take an early opportunity of communicating to you His Majesty's Pleasure.⁶⁹

This was a far cry from the bare toleration of Johnstown. The credit for it and for the Highlanders' new-found prosperity and influence in Canada, where John MacDonell was speaker of the Assembly, Angus MacDonell its clerk, and other Mohawk migrants sat in its chambers or on the judicial bench, was not due to any one man, but surely some part of it was owed to the Irish priest who "did his endeavours to keep the people strict to their adherence to Great Britain" and "wishing at the same time to move these people" made a "long and dismal journey of between 5 and 600 miles."⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Sydney to Hamilton, June 24, 1785, Public Archives of Canada, Q24, in Martin I. J. Griffin, *Catholics and the American Revolution* (Ridley Park, 1907), I, 131.

⁷⁰ Alfred, *Pioneers*, *passim*. Ernest A. Cruikshank, "A Memoir of Lt. Col. John MacDonell of Glengarry House, First Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada," *Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records*, XXII (1925), 20-59; A. G. Morice, O.M.I., "A Canadian Pioneer: Spanish John MacDonell," *Canadian Historical Review*, X (1929), 212-235; W. L. Scott, "The MacDonells of Leek, Collachie and Aberchalder," *The Canadian Catholic Historical Association Report*, 1934-1935, pp. 22-32.

ELIZABETH P. HERBERMANN

The following remarks were made by Mr. Richard Reid at the annual meeting of the United States Catholic Historical Society, November 20, 1956.

THE United States Catholic Historical Society was organized in December 1884, at the inspiration of John Gilmary Shea, Richard H. Clarke, and Charles G. Herbermann. Dr. Herbermann, editor-in-chief of the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, first president of the St. Francis Xavier Alumni Sodality in 1863, professor at the City College of New York, and Knight of St. Gregory, was president of the United States Catholic Historical Society and editor of its publications from 1898 to 1916. Before Dr. Herbermann's death, Miss Elizabeth Herbermann, his daughter, became associated with the Society, first as a member and then as executive secretary, a post she has held for forty years. Therefore, the memberships and terms of office of Dr. Herbermann and of his daughter have covered the entire history of the Society, a period of seventy-two years.

Miss Herbermann feels impelled to retire as executive secretary, to the deep regret of the officers and members. As secretary, Miss Herbermann in large measure was responsible for the fortunes of the Society, conducting its business under a succession of presidents. Her efficiency has been exceeded only by her devotion. She is the authority on the Society and its various publications, and the requests that have come regularly from scholars for information about the volumes we have published have always been promptly and courteously answered.

With her retirement at the end of the year, Miss Herbermann will become executive secretary emeritus, a post we trust she will hold for long and happy years.

THOMAS J. McMAHON

THE sudden death on December 6, 1956, of Monsignor McMahon deprived the United States Catholic Historical Society of one of its most active and honored members. He had been archivist of the society from 1937 to 1945, editor of publications from 1942 to 1949, vice-president from 1948 to 1950, and lately a member of the executive council. In each of these capacities his contribution to the society was inestimable.

Monsignor McMahon was forty-seven when he died. Into his forty-seven years of life and his twenty-three years as a priest he had crowded several careers, any one of which would be a record of achievement.

He was a native of Tuxedo Park, in the upper reaches of the Archdiocese of New York. Here the finger of God beckoned him to the priesthood, through Cathedral College, St. Joseph's Seminary in Dunwoodie, and the North American College in Rome. Fellow students remember an exceptionally gifted scholar.

For six years, from 1937 to 1943, he was professor of ecclesiastical history at Dunwoodie, where his stimulating lectures did much to sharpen the historical sense of future priests of the archdiocese. Fondly they recall his infectious enthusiasm for the glories of the Church.

He left Dunwoodie to become master of ceremonies to Cardinal, then Archbishop, Spellman and at the same time assistant secretary of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association. After 1946 he devoted most of his energy and talent to the Association as national secretary. It was a time of crisis in the Near East, with hundreds of thousands of displaced Arabs wandering homeless. In 1949 Pope Pius XII appointed him president of the Pontifical Mission for Palestine, in which office he became the accredited spokesman of the Holy See on the question of the internationalization of Jerusalem, on related problems of Christian rights and shrines in the Holy Land, and in behalf of the Arab refugees, whose plight he described before United Nations and congressional committees. His personal initiative enabled the Catholic Near East Welfare Association to exercise an extraordinary cultural influence at home in the United States, as the source

of increased appreciation for the history and ancient liturgies of the oriental rites within the Catholic Church.

Monsignor McMahon's final assignment, as first pastor of the newly-founded Church of Our Saviour, in mid-town Manhattan, brought the challenge of the world's most crowded business district, a challenge which he met, characteristically, with priestly zeal. There he laid the foundations of a parish and arranged for the building of a church which will stand as a monument to him.

Other memorials lie in the hearts of members of the Morgan Fraternity, composed of former students for the priesthood at Cathedral College, the Saint Paul Guild, and the United States Catholic Historical Society.

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UNIVERSITY OF PORTLAND LIBRARY, PORTLAND, OREGON
UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO LIBRARY, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO LIBRARY, SAN FRANCISCO,
CALIFORNIA
UNIVERSITY OF SCRANTON, SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA LIBRARY, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA
URSULINE COLLEGE FOR WOMEN, CLEVELAND, OHIO
VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY, VILLANOVA, PENNSYLVANIA
VITERBO COLLEGE, LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN
WEBSTER COLLEGE, WEBSTER GROVES, MISSOURI
WHEELING COLLEGE LIBRARY, WHEELING, WEST VIRGINIA
WOODSTOCK COLLEGE LIBRARY, WOODSTOCK, MARYLAND
XAVIER COLLEGE LIBRARY, CINCINNATI, OHIO
XAVIER UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA
YALE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT

FORM OF BEQUEST

I give and bequeath (if real property add "devise") to the United States Catholic Historical Society, incorporated under the laws of the State of New York, to be applied to the uses and purposes of said Society, and under its direction.....

(Insert ~~sum~~ of money or description of property)

MARYGROVE COLLEGE



DATE DUE

[illegible]

DEMCO 38-296



